MYTHS &

In the world of *Supernatural*, angels were once thought not to exist. In fact, in Providence, Rhode Island (in the episode *Houses Of The Holy*), Sam and Dean Winchester appeared to learn this first-hand, when they encountered what Sam thought to be an angel. In fact, this was the vengeful – though admittedly altruistic – spirit of a deceased priest named Father Gregory. The spirit was driving those he deemed in need of redemption to kill those he saw as being evil and deserving of death, until he was laid to rest with the last rites.

After this encounter, the brothers would obviously have a sceptical attitude toward the possible existence of angels. That is until Dean was pulled out of Hell by Castiel, and the Winchesters were confronted with undeniable evidence that *this* angel was like nothing they had ever met before...

Angels

Far from the common pop culture images of angels as beautiful winged females or child-like cherubs, the traditional angels as described in the Bible and other religious texts were actually rather different beings.

Angels in the Bible's Old Testament, as well as being messengers for the Lord, were also warriors or guards, smiting enemies of God and bringing down retribution. Traditions vary as to whether angels operate under their own free will, or whether they are simply an extension of God's will.

Though mankind often depicts angels as being in the shape of humans, they have also been described as having non-human form. In *Supernatural*, Castiel explains that his true form cannot be safely seen by humans (as the psychic Pamela Barnes found, at the cost of her eyes), and inhabits the body of a devout man in order to interact with Sam, Dean and others.

In some Roman Catholic texts, angels are seen as corresponding to the days of the week. It is said that Castiel, for instance, is the angel of Thursday.

Words: Neil Edwards

LEGENDS

There have traditionally been different ranks of angels, each with their own responsibilities, powers, and appearances...

Archangels

As the highest-ranking angels, the Archangels are probably also the most familiar to even the most casual observer of Christian traditions.

Some angels were not named in the Bible, though the four most important – the Archangels – have been named as Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael, with the name of the last varying according to culture or orthodoxy. In some accounts the name of the fourth has been given as Uriel (Muriel, in some accounts). In *Supernatural,* however, Uriel is apparently under the command of Castiel, though whether this means he is of a lower 'rank' is not yet known.

In some sources, however, like Enoch I (the Book of Enoch), a text referenced in the New Testament, it is said there are seven archangels – Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Zerachiel, and Remiel. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, however, would seem to be the three constants across all traditions.

Seraphim

The next in angelic hierarchy after the Archangels are the Seraphim. Mentioned in the Biblical Book of Isaiah, it's said that such a bright light emanates from these angels that no one can look upon them. In the Bible, the Seraphim make their first appearance in the Book of Revelation. They are part of God's angelic choir and the caretakers of God's throne.

The Seraphim are often connected with fire, which purifies and destroys the shadows of darkness.

Cherubim

The Cherubim are third in the rankings of angelic hierarchy, after the Seraphim. Despite the name, cherubim bear no real relation to the chubby, winged babies that the name 'cherub' often conjures up in the mind (which are more correctly named Putto). In the Biblical book of Genesis, the Cherubim were referred to as angels who guarded the left side of the garden of Eden with a "flaming sword which turned every way." Uriel, whose name means "Fire of God," has been connected by some with the Cherubim.

In some artistic renderings of Cherubim, they are represented by the faces of a lion, an eagle, an ox and a man with four wings. Sometimes these wings are depicted as being covered in eyes, representing their all-seeing nature.

Thrones

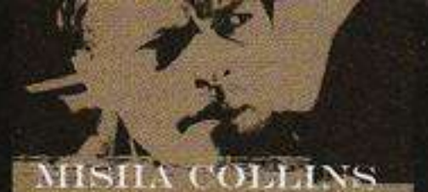
Referred to as the Thrones in the Book of Daniel in the Old Testament, these high celestial beings are seen as the carriers of the throne of God. They are depicted as large wheels of fire, covered in eyes. The Thrones were traditionally seen as being keepers or conduits for divine energies.

Others

The lower ranks of angels are divided into groups including Dominions, Virtues, Powers, and Principalities, each with different duties. Some have interpreted a passage in Ephesians as meaning that the Devil was once one of the Powers, who fell from grace.

Nephilim

According to the Book of Enoch, some fallen angels – the Grigori – saw the beauty of human women and took human wives, producing half-angel offspring. These children were known as the Nephilim (Nefilim, in some accounts). These offspring were said to be renowned, powerful men of large stature.



MISHA COLLINS INTERVIEW

Heavenly Creature

As one of the most dramatic new additions to the *Supernatural* mythology in season four, the angel Castiel has had a great influence on the Winchesters, particularly Dean. Actor Misha Collins spoke to *The Official Supernatural Magazine* about spreading his wings as this divine being...

Words: Jayne Nelson

After one of the most memorable entrances in *Supernatural* history in season four's *Lazarus Rising*, the angel Castiel fast became a fan favorite. That's largely down to the captivating performance of Misha Collins, who, after playing everything from a terrorist on *24* to a real-life serial killer in the controversial drama *Karla*, brings a sense of gravitas and contained power to the role. We caught up with him between episodes to find out more about why he thought he was going to be a demon, those pesky Lucifer rumors, and the weirder side of fandom...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Is it true that you originally auditioned as a demon?**

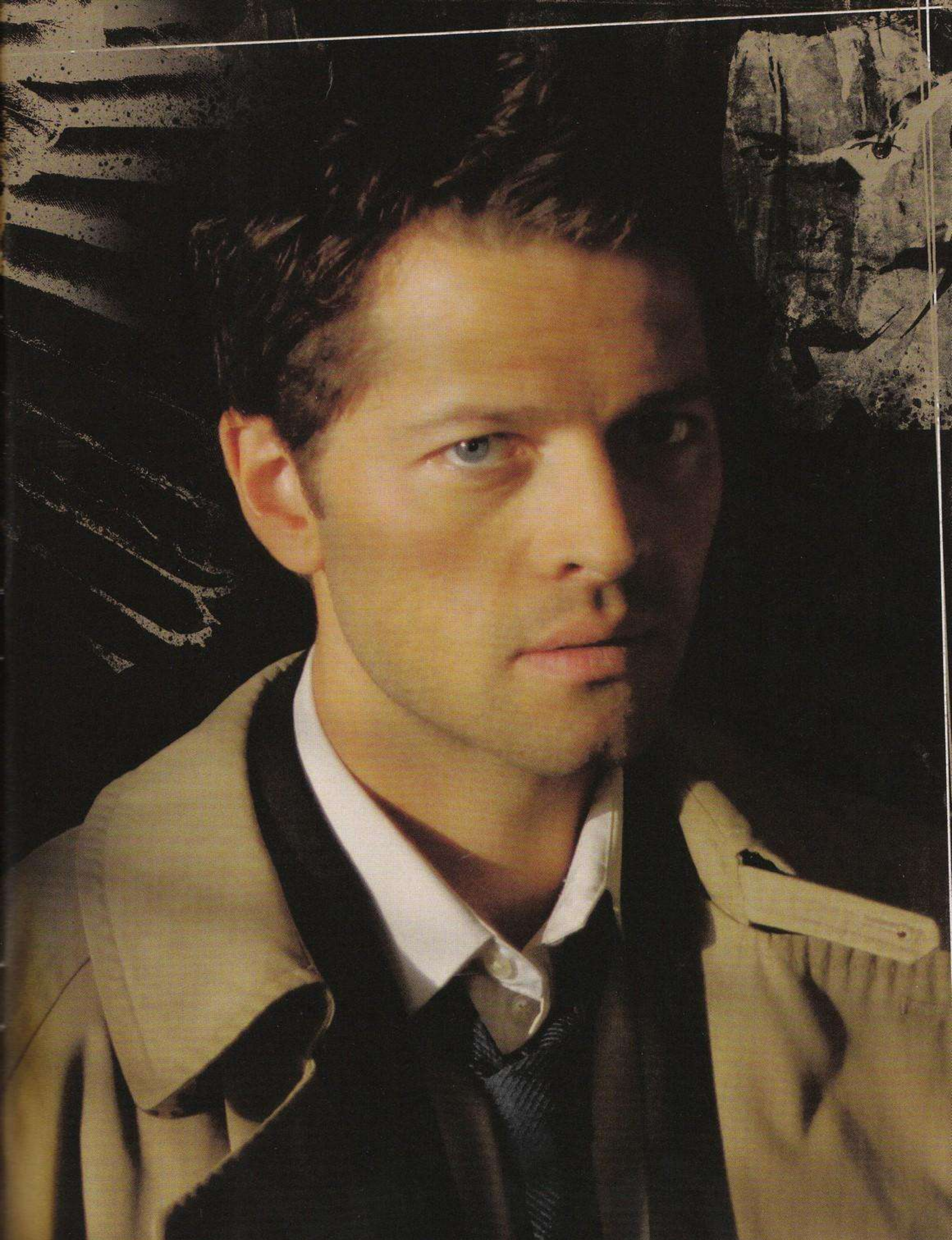
Misha Collins: Yes, it is! The fans of *Supernatural* are very devoted, and Eric [Kripke] was trying to obscure the fact that there was going to be an angel in the show from the fans. He sent out audition material for a demon, which I read through once and then he told me that actually, the role was [that of] an angel.

How do you approach playing an angel – it's not your average character, is it?

No, it's not! I've played serial killers, assassins... I haven't just played bad guys, but [I've never played anything] even remotely angelic before! I don't want to bore you with my philosophy of acting, but my philosophy is that humans have some universal qualities, so that when you play a character you're finding that character in yourself, and you harness one of many facets of humanity. When I got the role of an angel, and since he's not actually human, it kind of threw me for a loop! It's not a universal, human quality. But Eric gave me some direction, which was really helpful, and so did Phil Sgriccia, who was the director on the show [for *Are You There, God? It's Me... Dean Winchester*], and their direction was that Castiel's not been down on planet Earth for 2,000 years, so he hasn't been around human beings in all that time. There's a certain curiosity for him about them. That was really helpful. He seems incredibly old, and has a depth of experience and knowledge that's much greater than humans have. Angels are wise!

You seem to be playing him as though he's got a lot of power, and he's trying to keep it inside.

Yeah, I think so. I think that if you're really powerful, you don't really have to show it. Castiel doesn't have to be bombastic, because there's a clear sense about him that he's powerful, without him being demonstrative about it. But at the same time, from the first episode [of season four, *Lazarus Rising*] it's clear that if I'm not careful with my power I can harm people.



Will Castiel get the chance to kick some ass later on in the season, or are you not allowed to say?

[*Laughs*] We haven't shot much fighting – we had one big fight scene in episode 10 [*Heaven And Hell*], and I was pretty disappointed! I didn't feel like Castiel was great at fighting. There weren't many lightning bolts or things like that! But I think there will be ample opportunity in the future!

A lot of people would assume that, if you're playing an angel, he'd have fluffy wings and a harp and be a total goody-goody... have you come across that?

I think, generally speaking, that's what people think when they hear the word "angel." Which is really a modern opinion; historically, angels are really tough and badass. Somewhere along the way they got the fluffy wings and the harps and the perfectly formed cumulus clouds to sit upon, and they lost their edge. But I think that if you look back in the Bible and [other] ancient Christian lore, they're forces to be reckoned with. I think that's the angel prototype that Eric Kripke has been using. It's much more fun! It would be soooo boring to be a sweet little angel!

And there *is* another side, because in *It's The Great Pumpkin, Sam Winchester* we meet the angel Uriel, who's the bad cop to Castiel's good cop. That must be fun to play.

Yeah, it is. It's a totally different aspect to the character with Uriel being there. It's nice, because it shows that Castiel's got a softer side.

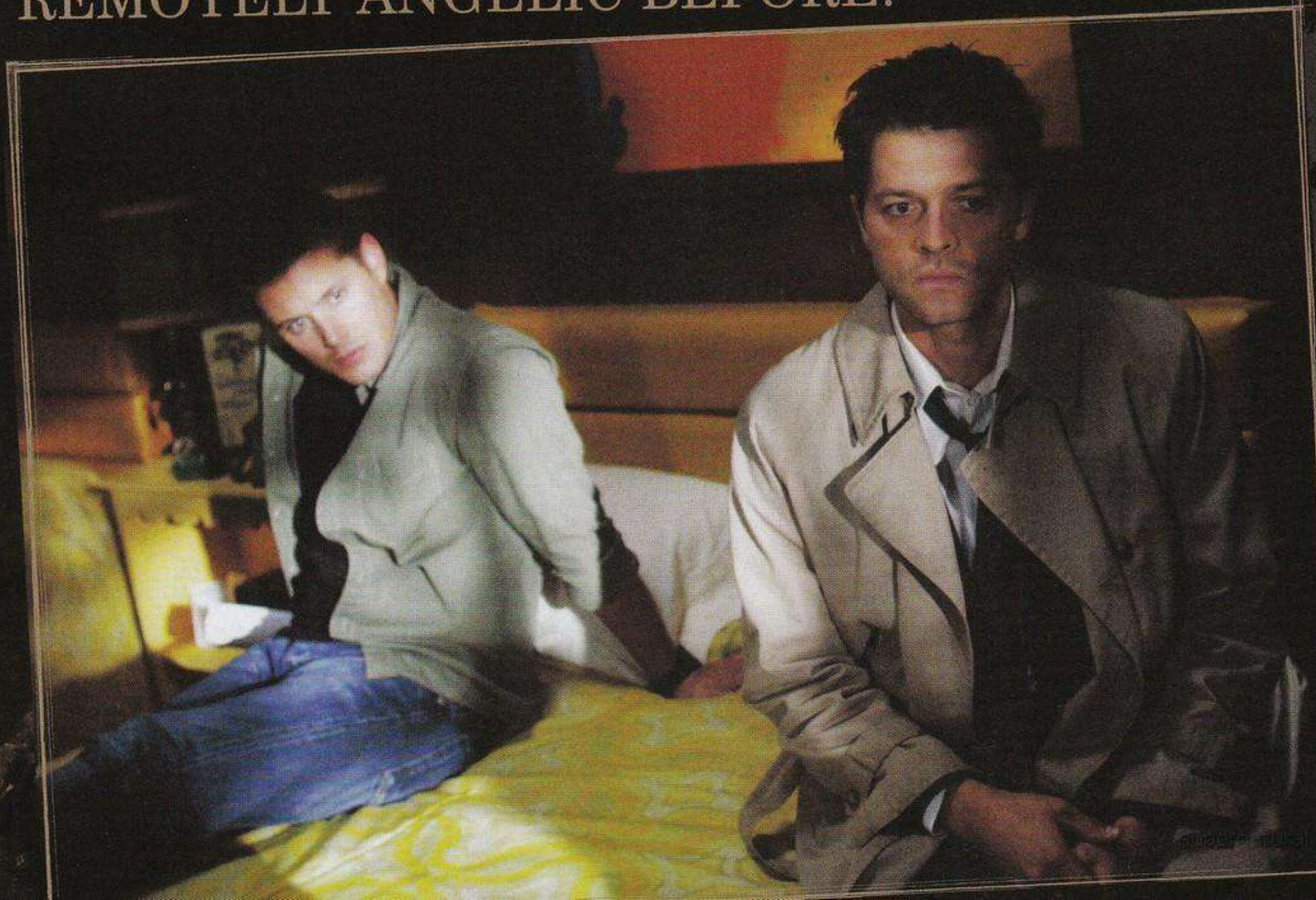
There have been a few fan theories flying around that Castiel's actually Lucifer in disguise!

I don't think that's the case, I really don't! But I don't know where things are going. I think that would be massively disappointing if it turned out that Eric was pulling the wool over our eyes with a total charade here. I don't think that's what's going on.

Do you even know for sure whether Castiel is good or bad?

My gut [feeling] is that he's good, but, you know, I'm not in the writers' room, so I don't know what schemes they're cooking up! But I don't think he's evil. In the last episode we shot [*It's The Great Pumpkin, Sam Winchester*] he has that heart-to-heart with Dean, and I think it's authentic. I don't think he's putting it on.

"I'VE PLAYED SERIAL KILLERS, ASSASSINS... I HAVEN'T JUST PLAYED BAD GUYS, BUT [I'VE NEVER PLAYED ANYTHING] EVEN REMOTELY ANGELIC BEFORE!"

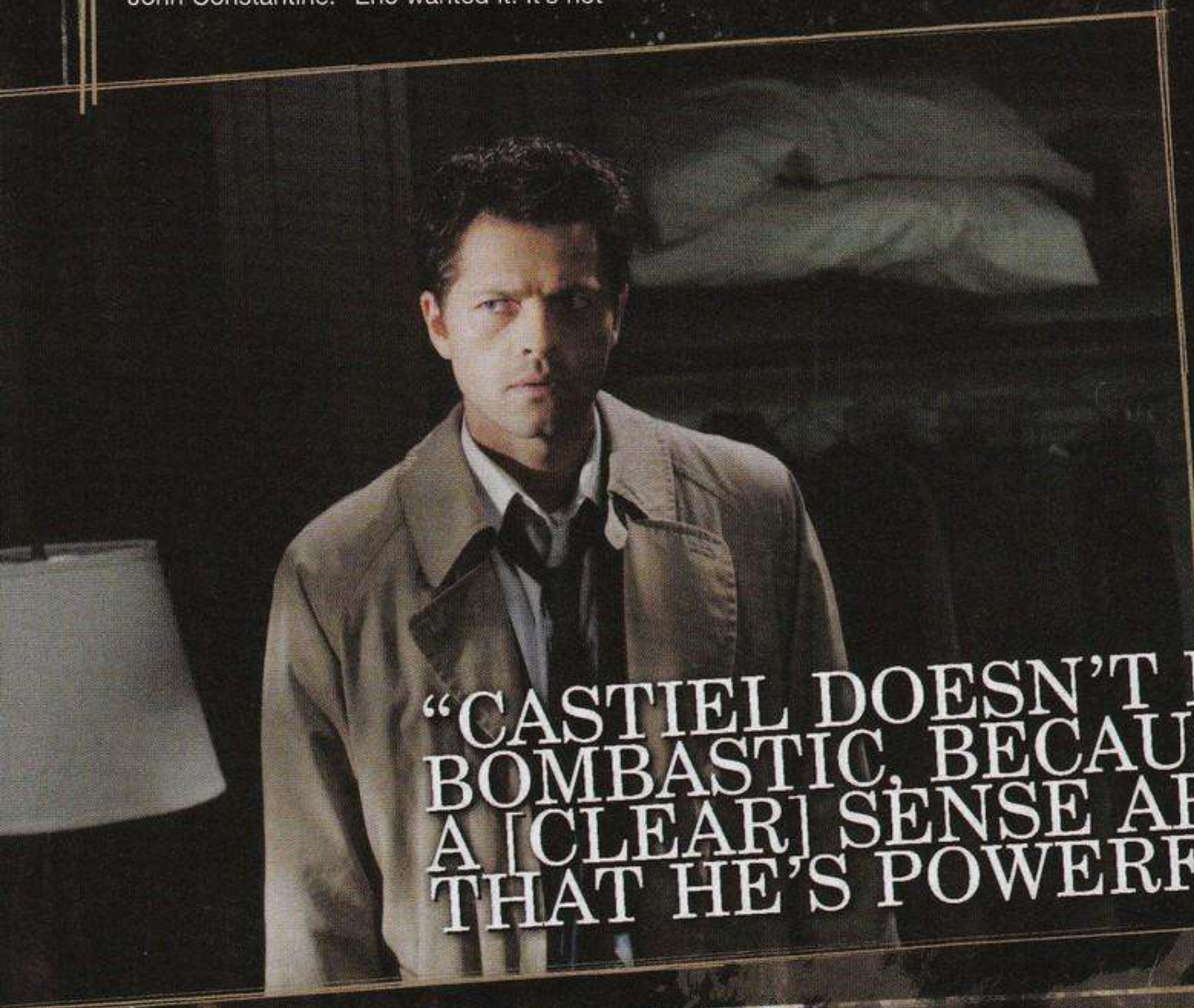


Really?
I had no idea! I've never been a big 'fan,' of any genre, that's just not me, but yeah… I'm totally [surprised by it.] I don't have a basis of comparison, I don't know how fandom has responded to any of the characters. I heard that Castiel got a really good reaction, and I'm glad to be on the fans' good side!

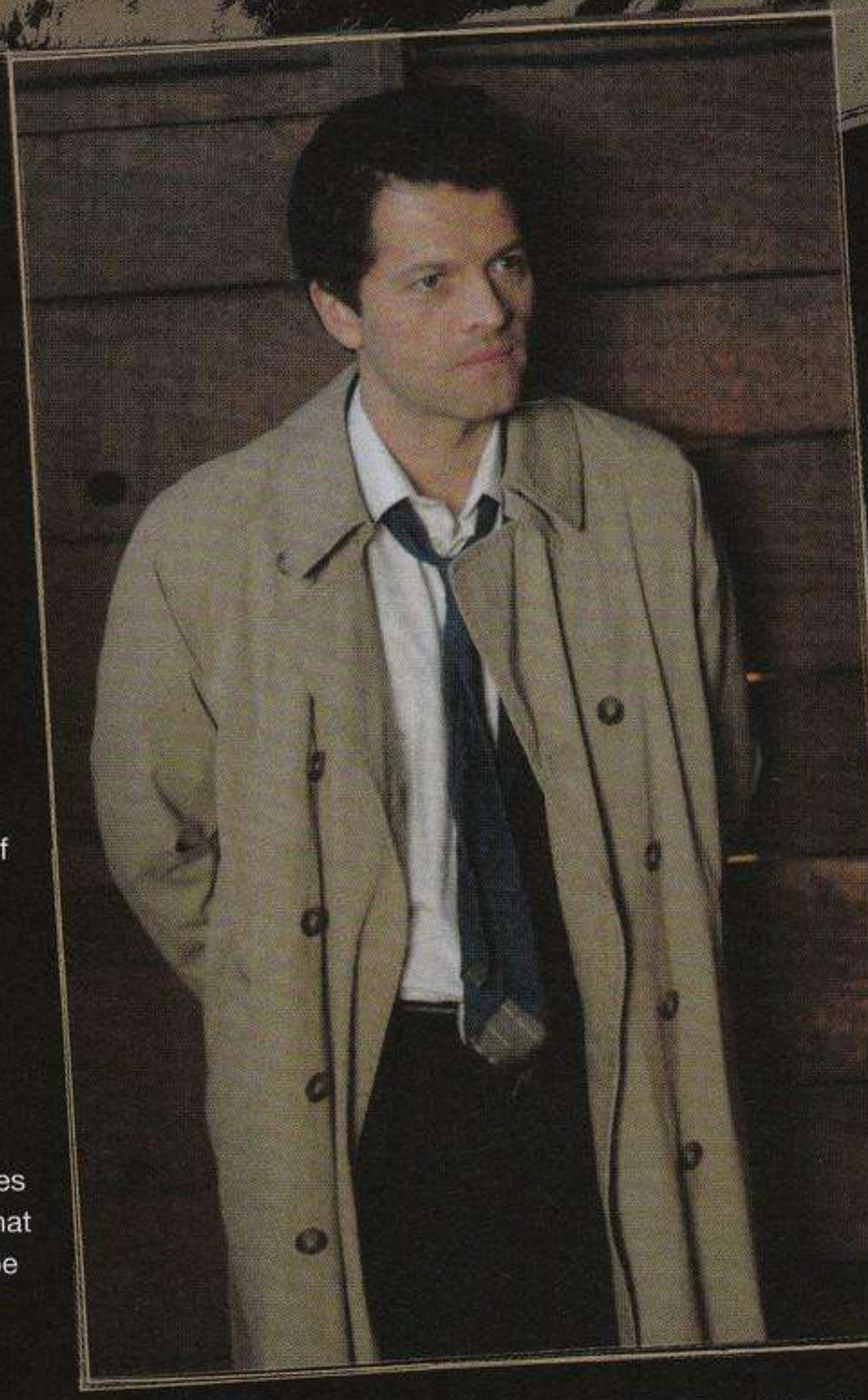
So have you actually been recognized by fans on the street – have people come up and spoken to you?
A little bit. One guy who approached me really didn't like my suit on the show. He really couldn't understand why an angel would be wearing it [*laughs*]! And if he *was* wearing it, why he wouldn't change his clothes at any point?

Do people come up to you and say "Hey, where's your wings?"
No, not yet. [*Laughs*]

Your outfit is a little bit like John Constantine's from the *Hellblazer* comic-book series. Do you know if that was deliberate?
It was in the first script as a parenthetical reference. I think it said something like "à la John Constantine." Eric wanted it. It's not



"CASTIEL DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BOMBASTIC, BECAUSE THERE'S A [CLEAR] SENSE ABOUT HIM THAT HE'S POWERFUL…"



starts shooting at eight or nine in the morning on the Monday, and by the time you get to Friday it's four o'clock in the morning. But yeah, it's a really nice crew.

Had you worked in Vancouver before?

I went on a long bike ride in Vancouver. I rode the Trans-Canada Trail, which is a trail that goes from the Atlantic to the Pacific across Canada, and I rode about 600 miles of that about two years ago and ended in Vancouver. Then before that I shot an episode of *Seven Days* up in Vancouver.

It's quite different to those desert locations of *24*, or fake-Chicago in *ER*...

Although, you know, all of the exteriors of *Supernatural* are supposed to be different places in America, and everywhere that Dean and Sam go seems to be green and mossy.

Speaking of traveling, you seem to have done quite a bit yourself. Is it true that you spent time at a monastery in Tibet?

I've done a fair amount of traveling and was at a monastery in Tibet for several months. I learned meditation and Buddhist philosophy along the way, and some Tibetan throat-singing. Which, when I'm warming up, sounds kind of like a goat slaughter, but once you get going, it's an amazing thing where you can produce multiple notes with your voice simultaneously so you're singing a chord.

Is there a lot of call for Tibetan throat-singing in your line of work?

You know, I haven't been called on to do it professionally yet, but I know that that call is *just* around the corner...

We also hear – and you're probably so fed up of talking about this, particularly since the recent presidential election – but you used to work as an intern at the White House...

I did, and I'm not fed up of talking about it!

Tell us some secrets about the White House that you haven't told any other journalist. We might not be able to print them, but we'll see...

[*Laughs*] A secret about the White House? Well, the most important piece of information I can share with you about the White House is that there is, in fact, a bowling alley there. I got to bowl in President Nixon's bowling shoes, so that's pretty much as cool as it gets!

That's amazing!

The White House is actually pretty well appointed; there's the Rose Garden out back, the bowling alley in the basement, and they've got the best movie screen there, too, that's just beautiful. Instead of having basic movie seats, each seat is a Barcalounger. It's really great!

So far the angels haven't been directly protecting the Winchesters much - Dean's almost been killed several times since Castiel showed up...

I think that the angels are going to get more involved. They obviously feel like the Winchesters can handle themselves; they've done pretty well for a long time.

Yes, they've survived four years so far. And the show's doing so well, isn't it? For a smaller network, ratings are going up...

Small network, and also unusual for that to happen in the fourth season of a show, so it's all good news.

Do you know yet if you'll be appearing in the rest of season four?

I'm gonna be around for the rest of the season, yes. You're the first interviewer that I've shared that with!

Do you think the Apocalypse will actually happen in the show?

I don't know where they're going to go with it, but from a dramatic standpoint it seems like they tend to go [in a] more dramatic [direction] in the show, and the Apocalypse is *very* dramatic. My money is on the Apocalypse!

"I GOT TO BOWL IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S BOWLING SHOES, SO THAT'S PRETTY MUCH AS COOL AS IT GETS!"

FALL FROM GRACE

Introduced in season four's *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, Anna proved to be a very different kind of angel. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* talked to actress Julie McNiven about chocolate cake, "Kool Aid hair," and that steamy love scene...

Best known before *Supernatural* as slimy Pete Campbell's put-upon secretary Hildy on the multi-award-winning *Mad Men*, Julie McNiven guested on the series playing a character very much at the front and center of the action. When we first met Anna Milton she was a seemingly confused innocent who could hear the angels, but she turned out to be not only an angel who'd committed the ultimate heavenly crime – cutting out her "Grace" – but also a love interest for Dean. As season four continues, we spoke to Julie about playing this complex fallen angel...

The Official Supernatural Magazine: **When you auditioned for *Supernatural*, did you know that you were auditioning to play an angel?**

Julie McNiven: Not when I did the first audition, but when I went back they had me read a couple of scenes from the next episode, episode 10. All of a sudden I was like, "Angel Anna? Oooh!"

Did that affect the way you played Anna in the first episode, do you think, knowing that she was an angel?

No, I don't think so. I think in the first episode [*I Know What You Did Last Summer*] she really has no idea; she's not lying or trying to be sneaky. She truly is innocent. They gave me this *Girl, Interrupted* critique, which was helpful. When you think, "Oh, I play an angel," what does that mean? How do I play an angel? It's almost as if you look at it as she's a person with circumstances, just like everybody else, only her circumstances are supernatural!

You made a great transition from the vulnerable Anna to the angel Anna. That must have been quite meaty for you, essentially playing two characters...

Definitely. She finds out that her parents are dead and her world's over, and then all of a sudden she realizes that... it's not like she forgets that her parents are dead, it's just that she realizes that

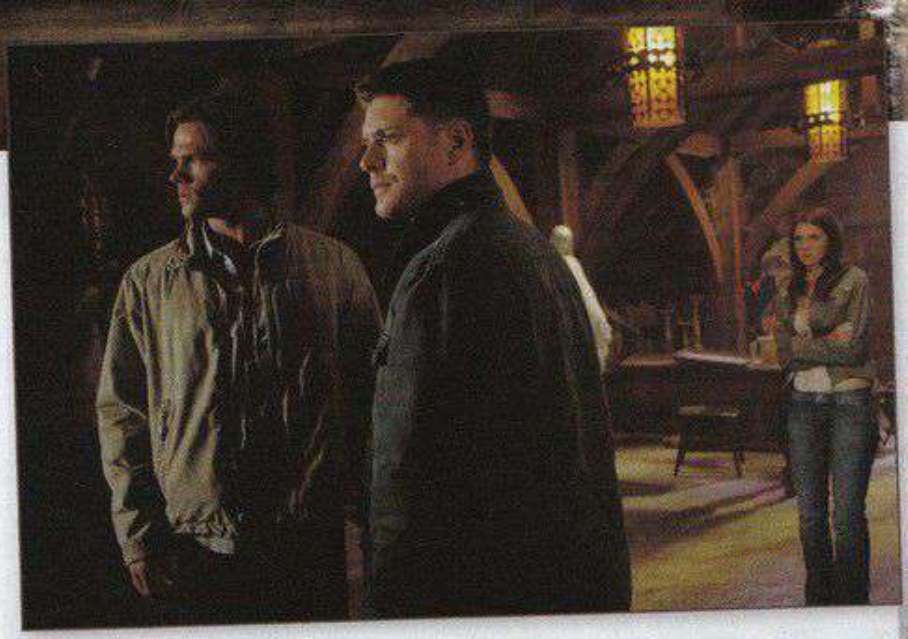
Words: Jayne Nelson

there's something *more*, that there's really no time to sit around and be vulnerable about her parents and her life. Except, of course, there's time to sit around and feel a little bit bummed that she's not gonna feel any more! That, I think, is a big struggle. Knowing that she has to do the right thing, but she doesn't really want to. Anna doesn't want to leave the human world, the world where they *feel* things.

It's a really bizarre concept, isn't it? How do you play the part of a character who has no emotions?
I think it's not that they don't have emotions – this is my take on it – but I think that their world up in Heaven seems very militant; what I imagine being in the military would feel like. There's not much time to sit around and *feel*; to think about feelings and have emotions. You have a job, you're given an order, and you follow it. When these angels come to Earth and witness human emotions so closely, perhaps that creates emotions within themselves.

You've obviously put a lot of thought into this!
I have some books waiting for me at the library – one of them is the *Encyclopedia of Angels* – just the angel mythology, because I'm going to be returning in episode 16 [*On The Head Of A Pin*]. I actually got an email from Eric the other day, because I knew I was going to do some interviews coming up and I thought, "I don't know if I'm supposed to say anything!" And he said, "Don't worry about it, tell them you're a full-blown angel who's on the run from Heaven," which I'm so fascinated by. So I asked my father and he said, "You should definitely read *The Man Without a Country*," which is a short story written during the American Civil War [that deals with] patriotism. It involves a man who disowns America and spends the rest of his life living on ships, never seeing America again, and at the end he just wants to see his home because he realized how much he missed it.
I thought, that's a really interesting one to read, because I don't know what it's like to not want to be in the home that you've had forever. [In this case, the home] Anna's rejecting is Heaven. There are different stories, I'm sure, within angel mythology, which I've never really looked into before. I'm sure there's something that I'll be able to use.

So had you watched *Supernatural* before you were cast?
I enjoy the show! I find it really funny. Scary, of course, but really funny and light at moments, and I think the



chemistry between Jared and Jensen is awesome. They're brothers on the show, but they seem to be brothers in real life, too. I like pretty much anything that's in that realm of the supernatural. It's fascinating because it's a very different world.

And if you're going to play anything on this show, an angel is pretty cool! How have your friends and family reacted to it?

They really enjoyed it. My mom and dad and my grandma had never watched the show before, so they were a little bit confused. My grandma was like, "I don't get it, but *you* were great."

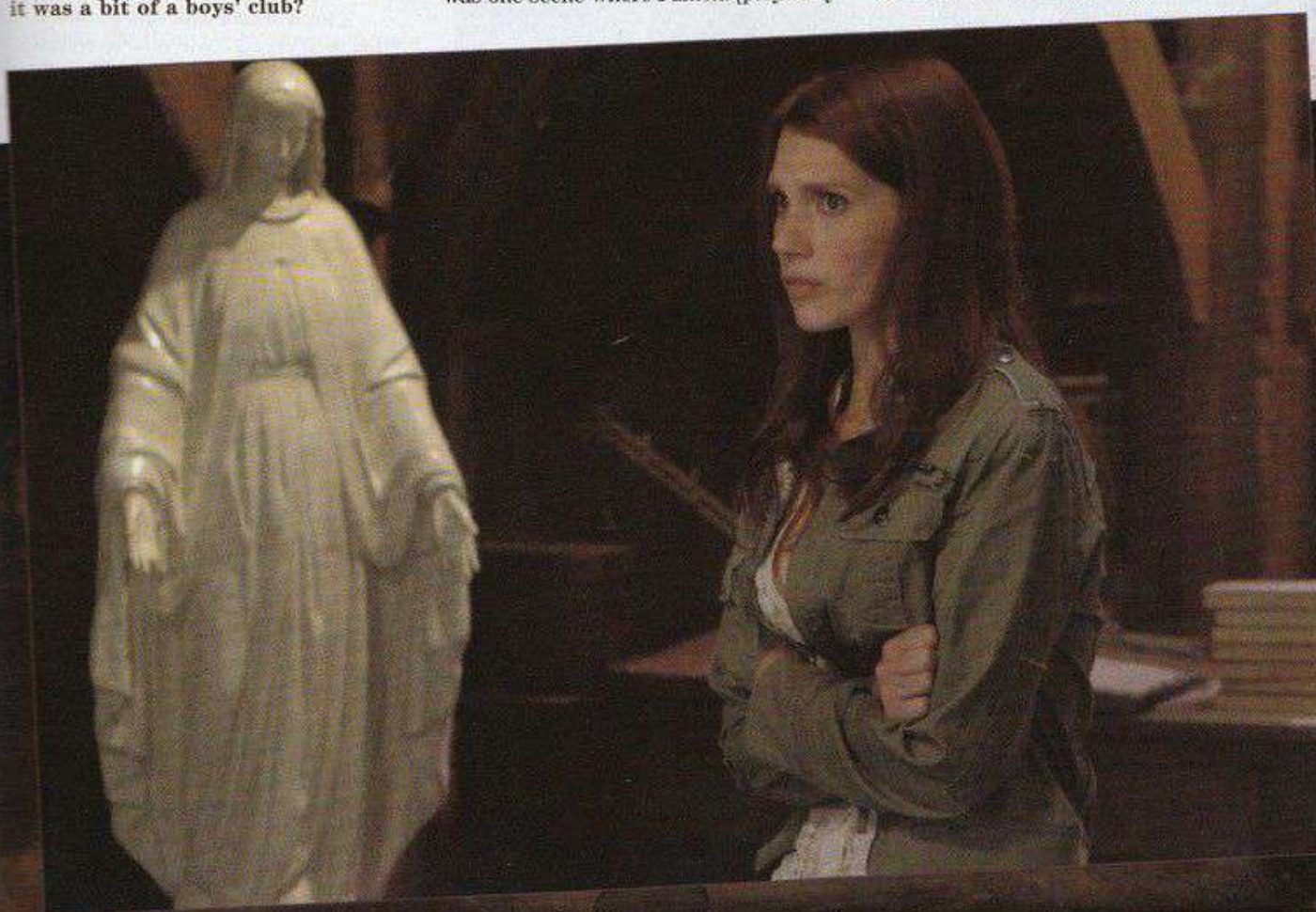
"And who was that boy you were kissing...?"

She was like, "That's a little scandalous, Julie, don't you think?" This has been fun. I mean, *Mad Men* is great, because it's an amazing show, but when I have more than just a couple of lines in an episode of that it's really exciting! [*Laughs*]

***Supernatural* has quite a male-heavy cast, doesn't it? Did you feel it was a bit of a boys' club?**

"I think the chemistry between Jared and Jensen is awesome. They're brothers on the show, but they seem to be brothers in real life, too."

Genevieve [Cortese] had been in a handful of episodes before me, which hopefully evened out a little bit of the energy. Everyone was very welcoming, and we had a lot of fun joking around, and the actors were hilarious. I'm not usually able to keep a straight face, so I probably ruined a lot of takes! There was one scene where Pamela [played by Traci Dinwiddie] had her white eyes in, and those were actually contacts, but when they shot my part of the scene with me talking, she didn't have them in, and I just had to react to what I thought they'd look like. Then they shot [from another angle where you could only see] the back of my head and I lost it, big time! Traci couldn't see anything, so I had to



By the way, we really love your hair on *Supernatural*.
It's so red, though, huh? I'm slowly moving to a slightly less red, slightly more orange, a little more natural. Watching [the episodes], I was like, "Whoa..." It looks so different under lights. I thought, "Oh my God, it looks like Kool-Aid hair!" I'm naturally a blonde. I told myself I'd never move to L.A. as a blonde, so I didn't!

What was it like to watch yourself explode on television, when Anna's Grace returned to her?
It was *awesome*! The special effects were so amazing! It was funny, because I'd gone in to do some ADR work, extra screaming and breathing [and stuff like that], and I saw that part, but they hadn't put the special effects in, and I thought it was weird. Then to see it – they're really good at what they do. It was exciting! Some actors can't watch their work, but I learn a lot from watching myself. There's more technical stuff involved than you think. I definitely learned a lot working with Jensen and Jared and Genevieve; they've worked a lot more than me, so they just do it without thinking, whereas I'm doing the scene and thinking, "Oh wait, I'm in the dark!" [*Laughs*] It's the little things that, as you work more, become second nature.

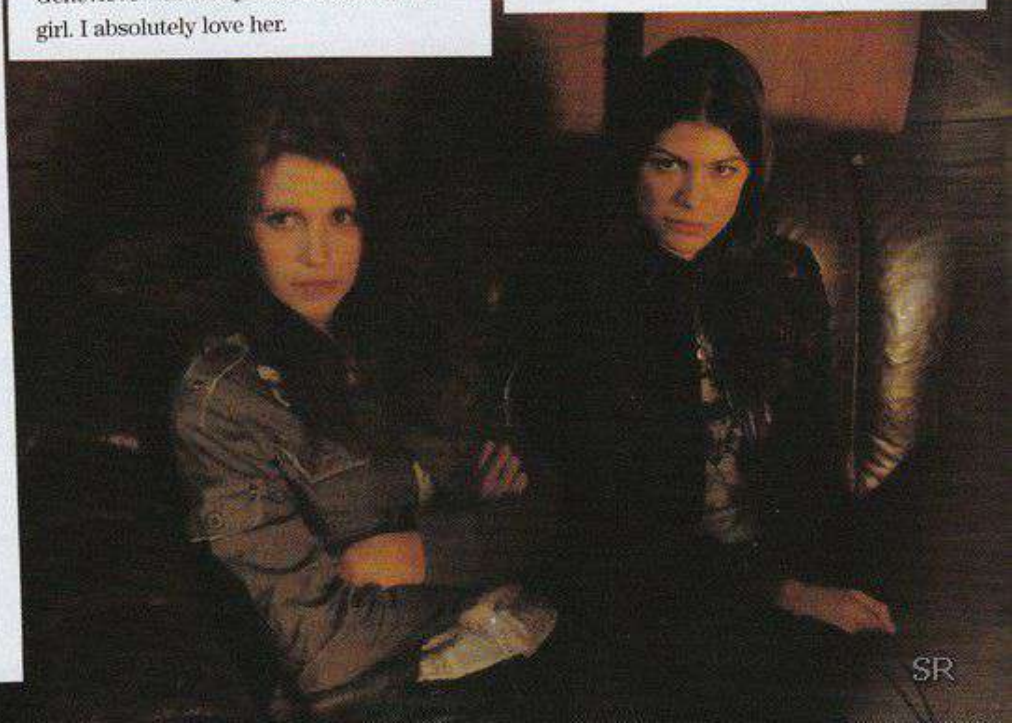
just stop myself from laughing – trying not to shake, basically. Then I could see in the corner of my eye Jensen shaking his head, like, "Oh, she's doing it again..." It's just so much fun, it's like getting paid to go play!

Speaking of Jensen, what was it like filming your sex scene with him?
I think, as an actor, you always know that there's a possibility that you're going to have to pretend intimacy with someone who you barely know, and of course as people who are in significant-other relationships, it's a little weird! He's a really cool guy, and we just joked around a lot. For me, personally, that's the only way to get through any sort of intimate scene. You just really make light of it so that you don't feel uncomfortable.

Genevieve had her own sex scene with Jared beforehand in *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. Did you both compare notes?
Totally! Not comparing notes, like, "How good was he?" because we're not concerned about that! We're concerned about shooting the scene. I was like, "So, how was *your* night?" She told me how it went, and Jared was a complete gentleman... I mean, the boys are just great, and that grounds you. You're like, "Okay, this is a little weird, but let's just do it and have fun."

As an actor, dealing with situations like this, particularly with females, it's really your responsibility to protect yourself and that you're comfortable with everything and you can speak up and say, "You know what, I wanna see that, and make sure that..." whatever. We talked about that kind of stuff, and not, "How good a kisser was he?" [*Laughs*] It was really my first on-screen sex scene. With *Mad Men* it was just making out and then the aftermath. Being able to have that conversation with Genevieve was really nice. She's a great girl. I absolutely love her.

"Anna doesn't want to leave the human world, the world where they feel things."



Anna had that great conversation with Dean about all the best things about being human. I was just wondering... would you personally give up being an angel for chocolate cake?

[*Laughs*] Oh, goodness! I do love chocolate cake, but... I guess you kind of have to look at it in a different light. If you basically were immortal and were living forever and ever, don't you think you'd want to know what it was like to be mortal? To think that your life could end at any moment? And what you'd do with that time? Maybe you'd eat some chocolate cake and have some sex – it'd be fun! [*Laughs*] I still question whether angels can't have sex. I mean, maybe Anna didn't when she was an angel, but it feels weird. You know, that line that Castiel said at the end – "We have a history" – we kind of joked around on set, like, "We have a history? What is that about?" Of course it's probably just that they had years of being soldiers together, but it's a lot more interesting if there's more than that. I don't know anything about it! It was a good way of having a line that let the audience and the actors ask some questions.

That's the thing about *Supernatural* – it's a TV show, but there are so many layers to it.

Particularly this season, adding in all the angels versus the demons. I think that's why this season is really [the most complex]. You always had the demons, but now it's like a yin and yang – there's the other side. You're finally meeting this other energy that's opposite. And the brothers are being pulled in opposite directions. It's a great season!

Do you get the feeling that the fans like Anna?

I feel like Anna is liked for the most part, but there are people who maybe didn't like the idea that an angel could fall. A lot of people were upset because she was being really selfish, but that's part of the story – she *was* being selfish! She wanted chocolate cake! She wanted to have sex! She wanted to feel love! You can see it as being selfish or you can see it as her just wanting to be human.

"If you were immortal and were living forever and ever, don't you think you'd want to know what it was like to be mortal?"

Appetite For Destruction

Words: Bryan Cairns

The first angel the Winchesters encountered, Castiel, has been a largely compassionate ally, but the second, Uriel, has proven to be anything but! *The Official Supernatural Magazine* speaks to the actor who plays the avenging angel Uriel, ROBERT WISDOM...

After roles including the tough but principled cop Howard 'Bunny' Colvin in the critically acclaimed HBO drama *The Wire*, and prison kingpin Lechero in *Prison Break*, actor Robert Wisdom proved the perfect choice to play vengeful angel Uriel on *Supernatural*. Willing to smite entire towns to achieve his ends, Uriel fought fire with fire. Catching up with him halfway through the filming of season four, we found out more...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Your character Lechero died on *Prison Break*, and as the angel Uriel on *Supernatural*, you're technically deceased. Has death become you?**
Robert Wisdom: [*Laughs*] Let's just say Lechero didn't know his real destiny, but Uriel is definitely an avenging angel.

How well-versed were you with the *Supernatural* universe before diving in this season?
I really wasn't. My girlfriend's first cousin, who is around 14 years old, is absolutely in love with the show. The demographic was slightly different from other things I've done, but I'm learning about the series. Actually, being on set and [being] privy to the scripts – it's a really great series.

A lot of *Supernatural* roles are shrouded in secrecy. Did you have a strange audition process?
Actually, there wasn't an audition process. There was an offer made, so somehow they envisioned me fitting this character. In a sense, it's been like some of the other great projects I've been on where you have no idea what's going to happen with the characters. I just heard "angel," and we all assume that's someone with wings, dressed in white, and wearing a gown. Then [the character] comes in and [he's] this heavy-duty guy who wants to smite everybody. It really kind of flipped my pages, so I had to do some rethinking. The story is there and the character is totally fleshed out, so I appreciate them

seeing me as someone who could fill this role. It's a real honor.

Misha Collins, who plays Castiel, turned to the Book of Revelation to research angels. Did anything inform your performance of Uriel?
Yes, I actually read the *Book of Enoch*, and then I just went through a lot of different angel lore. Uriel is actually one of the top angels, so I looked at the quality this angel had biblically. It lists him as everything from an avenging angel to an angel of compassion, so I figured I could work with that. However, the *Book of Enoch* is pretty scary. There's some pretty powerful, visionary stuff, and you see a lot of angels we really don't associate with angelic life.

What were your thoughts on the way Uriel was introduced, because it certainly wasn't with a bang?
I just had trust. No actor wants to have his back to [the main characters] during a scene, but with every passing line, Uriel's gravity just grew. Finally, when he turns, it's game on! I thought that was theatrically very powerful, because from that moment of meeting the two boys, it's very clear what our relationship is going to be and what my mission is. It was a very sharp way to set the character up.

Of course, Uriel is no Castiel. How do they approach things differently?
Castiel is a man of reason, and he's very controlled in an entirely different way. Uriel simply wants to take everything out. I know what my power is, I'm ready to use it and get on with it. I don't suffer fools. Castiel has a lot more under his deadpan ways. On the surface, he's much more compassionate, but my compassion comes after I lay everyone down and see who survives [*laughs*].

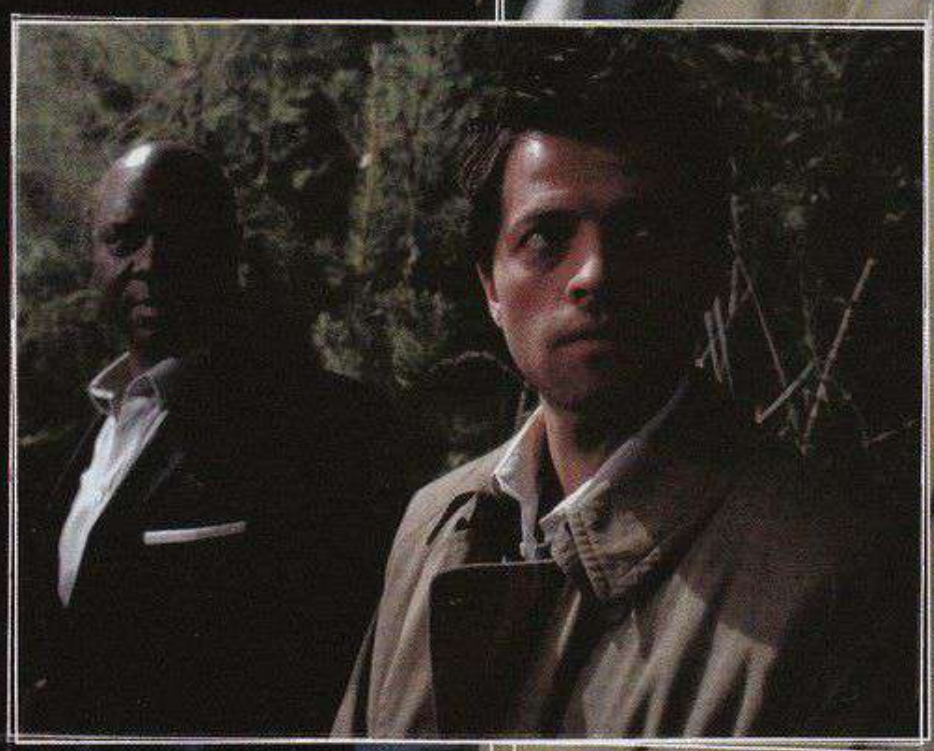
Subtlety hasn't been one of Uriel's strong points.
No, he's not a very subtle guy [*laughs*].

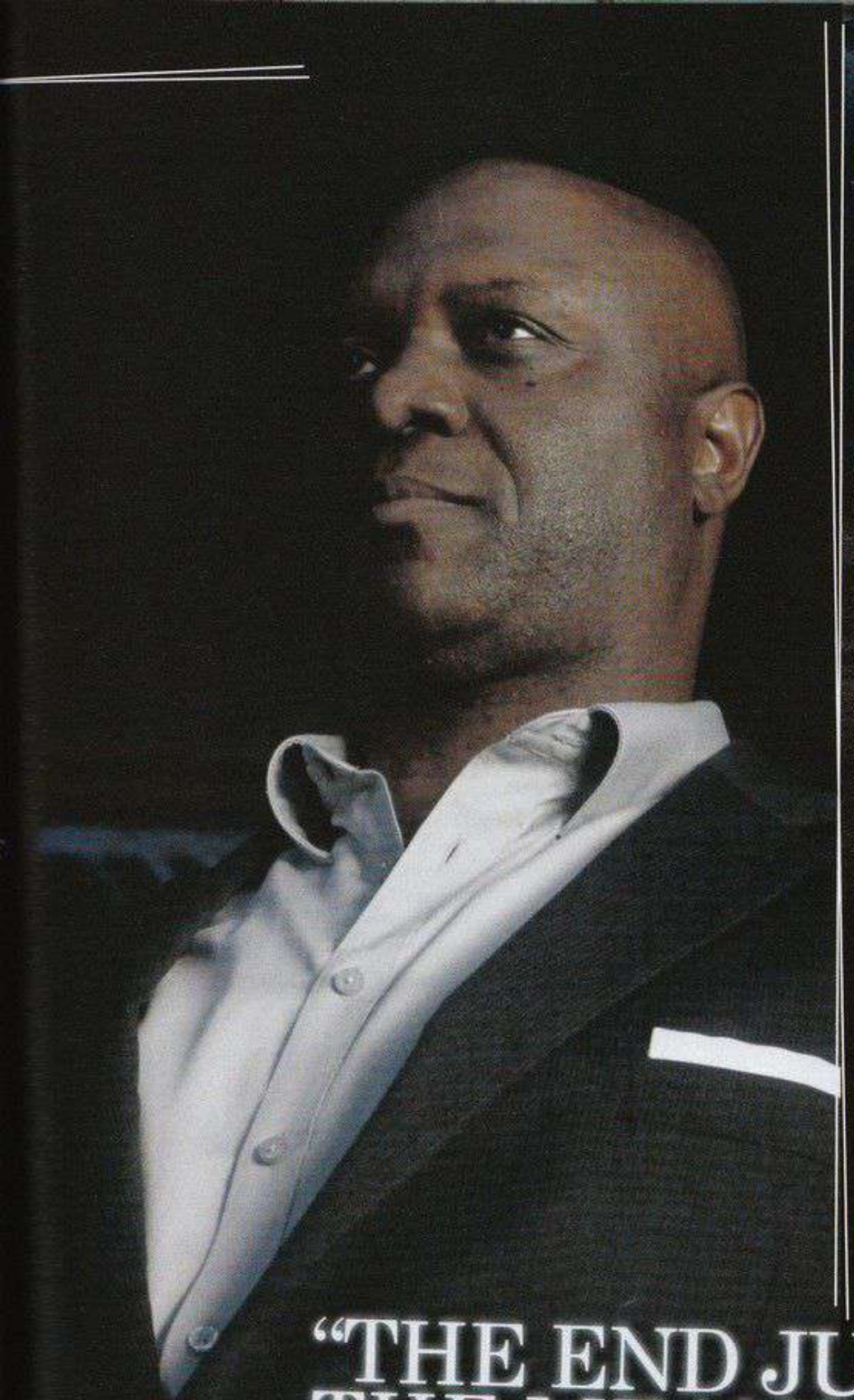
Castiel pulled Dean out of Hell, but Uriel doesn't seem too fond of the Winchester boys. Initially, how does he see them?
He sees them as accidents waiting to happen. Uriel doesn't think they're suited for the powers they have. Uriel gets Dean

all too well and understands what he faced. As to Sam, Uriel believes Castiel is just wasting his time on him, that Sam isn't worthy of the powers. [He believes Sam] can't handle them and is going to screw everything up, so better to take him out while they can. But again, what's interesting is, although Uriel is efficient in how he carries out his missions, it's clear there's a much bigger picture. It says something very beautiful about whoever the creator is, that even his angels don't have a handle on the big picture, yet these Winchester boys living their lives and stumbling through have a better grip on things than the angels do.

In the beginning, Uriel did a lot of posturing. What did you enjoy about that moment where he really gets in Sam's face?

I loved that scene. It's like the first day of a cockfight where it's very alpha [male]. We're just sitting on the edge of calling each other out, but I can't. That's when my wings are clipped. It's very interesting to see who Sam is and how he steps up. In a strange way, Uriel needed to see that, but he also gets to see what he needs to be effective in this crazy world of humans. There's a lot of subtext we get to lay in there.





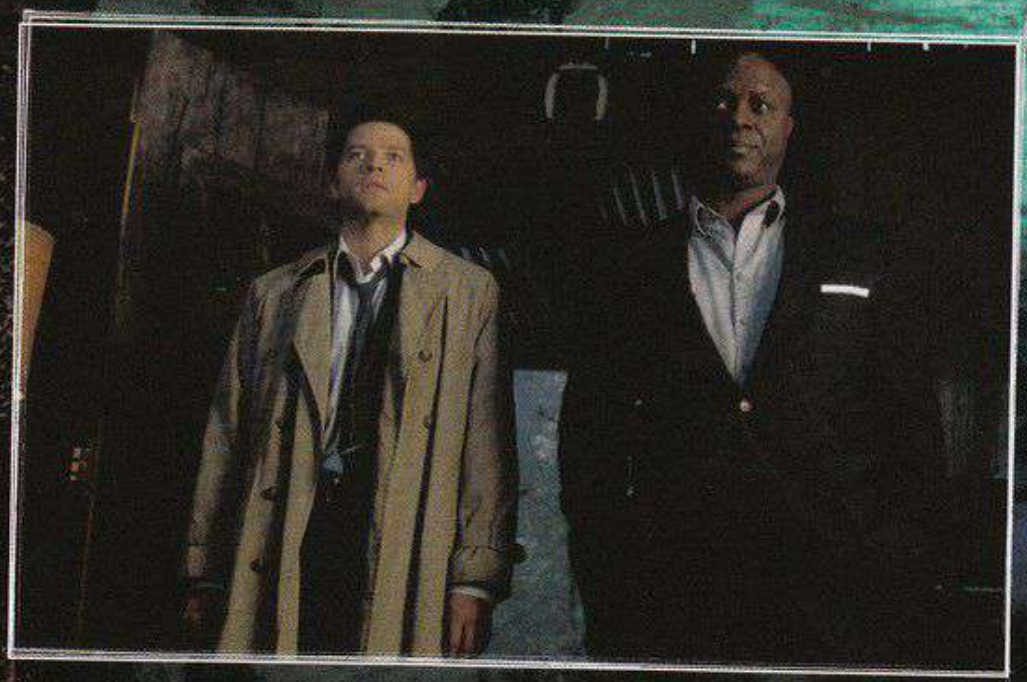
Uriel is prepared to wipe out a town to prevent a seal from being broken. Recently, he's targeted Anna for her angel eavesdropping abilities. Castiel has had some doubts, but what kind of angel is Uriel to have no qualms about doing such terrible things?

The end justifies the means in the angelic world, and humans are just specks on the planet. Smiting a whole town to take out an evil is an incidental thing to do. We can't get our heads around the magnitude of it, so we call it evil. It mirrors some of the things we see like hurricanes, tsunamis, and natural disasters where we wonder, "How can there be a God?" In fact, in the cosmic realm of whether three thousand or 20,000 people are displaced from [smiting] or disease, it's almost the cost of doing bigger business. Because we can never understand this bigger business, we label it good and bad, but in fact, there are forces that build up and forces that tear down. It's a very poetic and sophisticated thing to pose to the audience.

At the end of *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, Ruby finally encounters Castiel and Uriel. Do they simply accept her as an ally or are they pissed there's a demon in their midst?

Uriel's reaction is basically that they can't go there. Ruby is [an evil] demon [to him]. Castiel looks at it like chess, but I see it in much more black and white terms. There's no potential for being an ally, or any way I can work with her. It's interesting the boys are finding a way to make this connection, and she's finding a way through her demonhood to make the same connection. Everything's in flux.

"THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS IN THE ANGELIC WORLD, AND HUMANS ARE JUST SPECKS ON THE PLANET."



At first your character did a lot of threatening, so what was it like finally getting to cut loose in *Heaven and Hell*?

It's like anything where you have to build up some steam. The pay-off is we get to meet the true bad guys, these senior demons, and there is something Nazi-ish about them. That's good because we do have a marker on evil in our history during the last century, which is Hitler and what he represents. They've drawn a character like that, so we get a really clear opponent and then we go into action. It's something out of the Wild West, where we're knocking guys on their heads. You see the full power of Uriel, what he's capable of, as well as his limits. You see this angelic force in Anna and what that Grace really does and how it operates. You see power among the male angels, but pure Grace in Anna. That gives you a real flavor for the angelic realm. But I get to kick some ass and I like it!

Sounds like you were thrilled to finally unleash the wrath of God!

I love that phrase, "The wrath of God," and now I understand it! I really got to use my magic on a couple of guys and knock them around. I really like that it's effortless. There's a greater power I have access to, and it's a nice challenge as an actor to convey that what you are fighting with is much bigger than you. Again, I had to watch Castiel's back, because he's not as good at physical stuff.

Uriel also confronts Dean and Ruby in that episode...

Yeah, Ruby and I have a pretty intense little face-off while Dean and Uriel continue their sparring. Dean isn't intimidated either. He comes at me pretty strong. We had a nice scene together where I get inside his head, and for me, that shifts Uriel from brawn to understanding human nature.

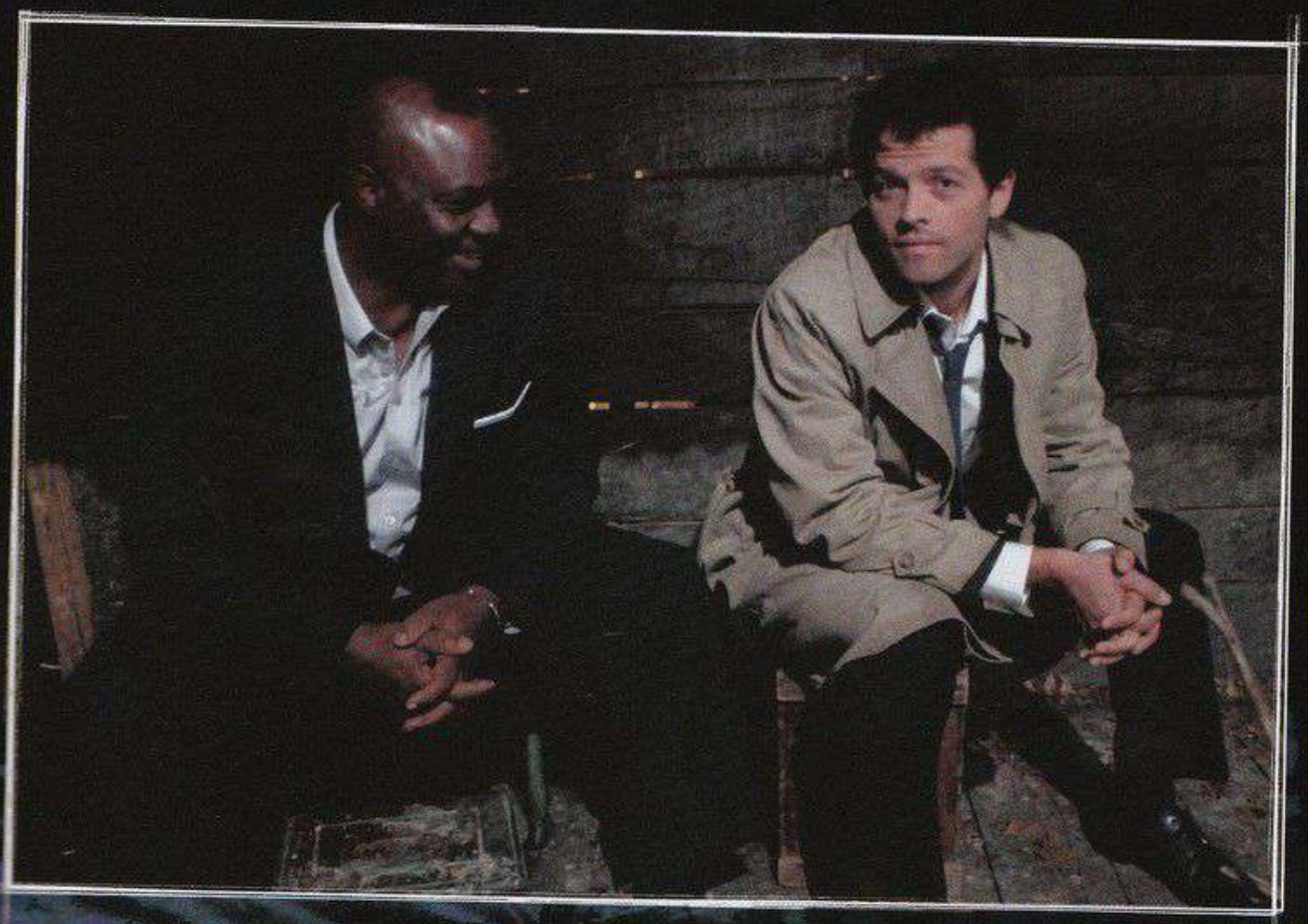
"URIEL SIMPLY WANTS TO TAKE EVERYTHING OUT. I KNOW WHAT MY POWER IS. I'M READY TO USE IT AND GET ON WITH IT."

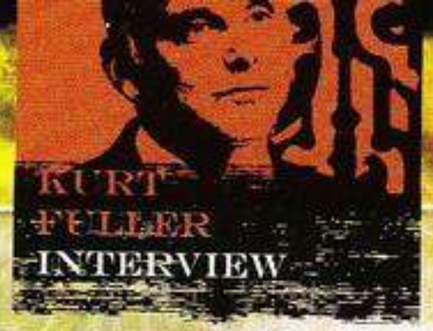
Not much is known about Uriel or his origins. What would you like the writers to explore on those fronts?
That's an interesting question. You never want to get into a one-note thing, so I'd like to see the compassionate side of Uriel, the angel who takes care of children. I see that as the driving force behind the heavy-duty face I put on, and [think it] would add something interesting. I realize we are moving a much larger storyline along, but I'd like to see us expand beyond just kicking ass. I always think there's more that I can bring to a character than pure brawn.

How's it been working with Jared, Jensen, and Misha?
They're great guys! Jared is a straight-up nut. He's crazy, loveable, and has a wicked sense of humor. Jensen is a Texas boy [too], and salt of the Earth. He's a super solid actor and has his fun, but he's the level-headed one between the two of them. Misha is a great guy and fantastic to work alongside. We immediately developed a nice little chemistry between us. For our first scene, I hadn't met him yet, so I just went with what my gut told me. Then, when I saw his performance, it fit right in and allowed us to springboard to other dimensions. We were pretty much on the same page from day one, and when we worked together, it just became better. I'm happy with it and I think the producers are, too.

With *The Wire*, *Prison Break* and now *Supernatural*, how's it been starring in these television series with such passionate fanbases?
I really feel it's an honor to have been part of [these] hit shows. There's a really high bar and the best thing an actor can do is ignore that. If you think about it, the characters are usually five steps ahead. You have to just trust what you do and make it solid. From the first moment on *Supernatural*, the feedback was really amazing, so I knew I was in the right ballpark and it's just gotten better. It's phenomenal to be in a world where the fans are absolutely rabid. That is almost separate from the series. We put out the show and then there's the following. I haven't been to any of the conventions, so it will be interesting when that stuff comes up. However, the feedback I got from [playing] Lechero was unbelievable. So many people watched *Prison Break* and connected with the darkness in Lechero. I expect the same from *Supernatural*!

"I LOVE THAT PHRASE, "THE WRATH OF GOD," AND NOW I UNDERSTAND IT!"





Far From H

Everyone has had a problematic boss, but Castiel's is more troublesome than most. After all, the archangel Zachariah plotted to bring about the Apocalypse! The manipulative Zachariah is played by prolific actor Kurt Fuller, who came to *Supernatural* after roles in movies like *Bonfire of the Vanities*, *Scary Movie*, *Ghostbusters II*, *Auto Focus*, *Ray*, and *Wayne's World*. As filming was about to get underway for *Supernatural* season five, we caught up with Fuller to find out what it's like playing the character...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Were you following *Supernatural* before joining the series as Zachariah?**

Kurt Fuller: Not at all, really. I had only heard about it. For me in Los Angeles, it was sort of this show under the radar. I've come to find out it has an incredibly dedicated, hardcore, intense fan base, though!

All the angels this season have distinct personalities, so how was Zachariah presented to you, and what was the key to finding his voice?

Well, that's very interesting, because he was described to me as being like the actor Morgan Freeman. When I think of Morgan, he's calm, benign, nice, but an

Words: Bryan Cairns

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authoritative guy. As an actor, I don't play benign very well. When I try to play benign, even when I'm a good guy, people go, "Oh, you're the bad guy. You were the jerk in that!" even when I was the nicest guy I could possibly be. I know that about myself, so I had to decide to play him as a boss. When you see Zachariah the first time, he actually takes the form of Dean's boss. I thought that was a great way into it. I play him as someone who has a plan and is just trying to get everyone to go along with his vision. Zachariah can be funny, strong, pathetic, cool, or do whatever he has to do, because he knows his plan is the right one.

Touching on the humor, Zachariah spouts dialogue like "Sam, Sam, Sam. Marsha, Marsha, Marsha." Is that glib attitude fun to play?
Well, when we're doing a show like *Supernatural*, playing somebody who is going to help unleash Lucifer upon the world, and playing all these huge, ethical, world/heaven soul-changing events, everything boils down to human behavior. People like to be funny and change things up. They have egos, and it's always the little things that are interesting. I love Zachariah's sense of humor and intelligence. Really smart people love to feel they're smarter and glibber than everyone else, and so does Zachariah.

The archangel Zachariah may have claimed he wanted to stop the Apocalypse, but as Dean discovered, that was far from the truth. Actor KURT FULLER told us more about the untrustworthy archangel...

eaven

The name Zachariah actually appears in the Bible. Did you do any special research to better understand angels or this role?

It's very easy to Google anything, and because I don't want to play an angel as a concept, or second-guess what these fantastically creative geniuses are doing, whenever I think about being an angel, it gets away from the spirit of the show. I'm just playing a person, and I don't want to second-guess what the relationships are or how it resonates biblically. I just want to play what's on the page and let what unfolds be determined by the writers. This isn't a history show, so I didn't want to go there.

Castiel and Uriel both had very dramatic introductions, so what were your thoughts on the subtle way Zachariah arrived on the scene in *It's A Terrible Life*?

I can't speak to what has previously happened, but I really love this casual, "You look to your left, and it's the world you always thought it was. Then you look to the right and your whole life has changed in a second." That's the way life and events work. You step off the curb at the wrong time and you're dead. Life is usually a series of very small, seemingly normal events. Dean was at work, he had a boss, the boss touched him on the head, and his whole life changed. I love that much more than coming down in a lightning bolt and blowing up the building.

Zachariah referred to humans as "smelly things," so in your mind, how does he view Sam and Dean?

He sees them as smelly little

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necessary things, just like he was when he was a human. They are cogs in a much, much, much, much bigger plan, and as inconvenient, slightly off-putting necessities.

Did you and Misha Collins discuss the nature of Zachariah and Castiel's relationship at all?
We did not, and the reason is I have found it all to be impenetrable. I will say we did discuss in the barest of terms what our hierarchical relationship was and that I was his boss. In the management scale of Heaven, I'm supervising him and we let it play out. When you're acting, as long as you know who has the power in the scene, that's what's important.

Were you shocked to discover Zachariah wanted to bring about the Apocalypse, or were you privy to that major piece of information all along?
Oh boy! That wasn't outlined for me at the beginning in any way, shape, or form! That was a bit of a surprise to me. I'm still wondering what episode I'm going to get killed in. Nobody told me anything. The writers had a plan. They knew how many episodes I was going to do. I thought that was an incredibly well-written script.

"THE THING I LIKE ABOUT ZACHARIAH IS THAT HE WORKS ON PEOPLE'S MINDS."

Zachariah manipulated the Winchesters as much as Ruby did, and acted outside of God's jurisdiction. Is he a villain, no better than Uriel, or did Zachariah simply have the best of intentions?
You've probably heard this before, but no actor ever sees himself as a villain. They always see themselves as the hero of the story. Zachariah is trying to save all of eternity and maintain the proper balance between Heaven and Hell. What he's doing is absolutely necessary and the right thing to do.

How do you predict Zachariah is going to respond to Castiel's betrayal of him?
Well, it's not going to be pretty! That's what I think. Castiel is much more assertive now, and really shocked me there at the end when he took it upon himself to help Dean. "Sorry, you broke the law and now you have to do the time." As I said in the first episode, I have to get the ducks back in a row. Right now, they're not, but I have time on my side. I hope.

Fans have wondered where Zachariah was zapped away to. Have you developed your own theories?
I feel I can't go back to Heaven. I'm in

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trouble up there already. I can't go to Hell because I'm in trouble there, too. I feel I've gone to some middle area like Limbo where the souls are without a place to go. If I was on Earth, I'd be on some boat out in the ocean, in the international waters, so now I've gone to an international "Netherworld" area. There's really no other place I can go.

To date, the angels have displayed some extraordinary abilities. Even though Zachariah whisked Dean off to this other-dimensional "green room," would you prefer to be more hands-on in the action department?

The thing I like about Zachariah is he works on people's minds. He's manipulative and dissects people's behavior to try to influence them based on where he can probe their susceptibilities. It takes a lot more creativity, too. Anybody can blast somebody out of a building. That's easy, but to talk them into jumping out of the window is much harder.

"ZACHARIAH IS TRYING TO SAVE ALL OF ETERNITY AND MAINTAIN THE PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL."

Zachariah and Dean certainly have that tongue-in-cheek banter going on.

Jensen Ackles is a really good actor. It makes me better, because no matter how subtle I am, he'll pick it up and respond to it. Jensen has a great sense of humor as well. I know I'm going up to Vancouver in July for the season premiere, and I'm really excited, because it's an amazing working environment. I've worked with a lot of Oscar winners in my time, and I have to say, Jensen's really good.

A highlight was when Dean called Zachariah "Chuckles" and you

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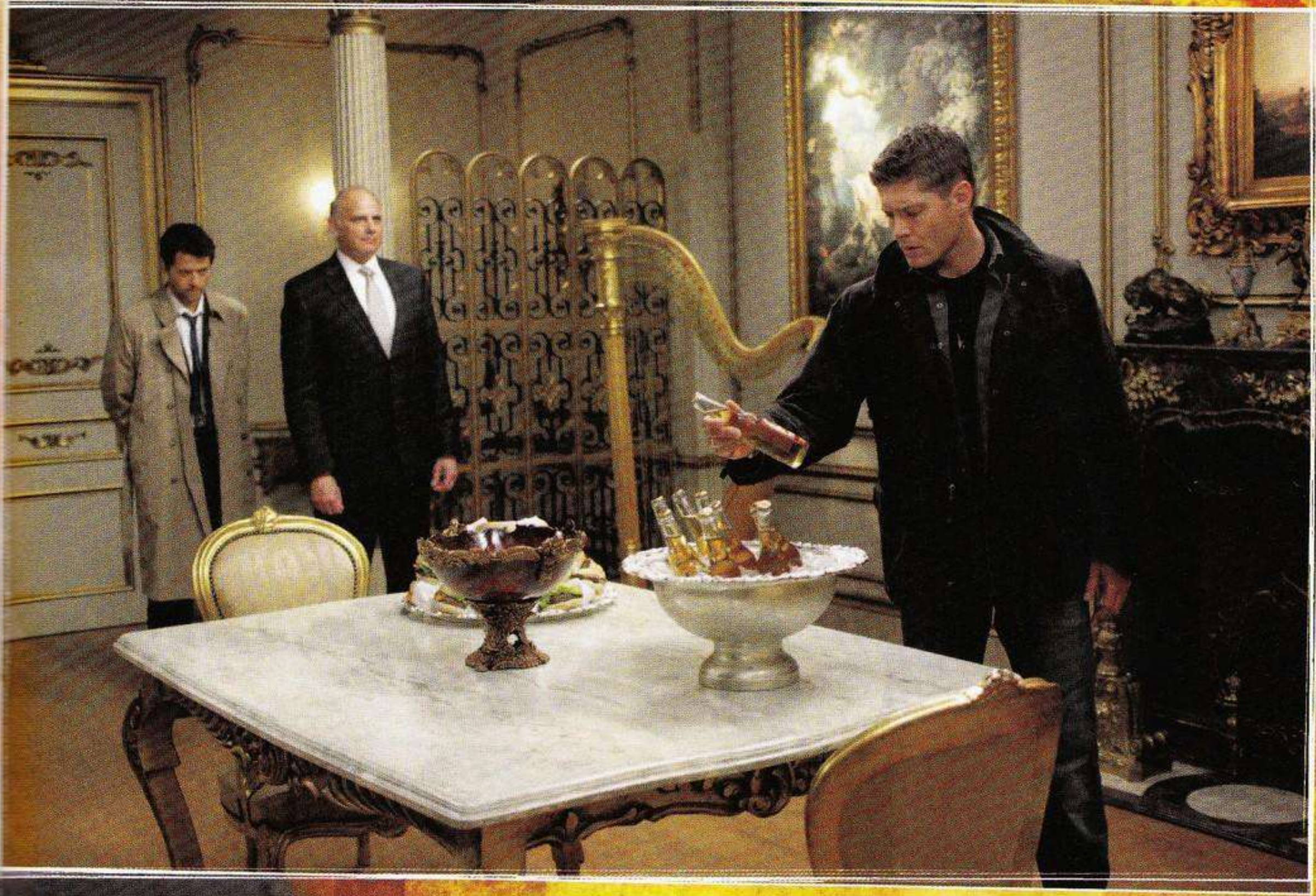


maliciously reminded him that he pledged his obedience.

Yeah, as much as I hate it, Dean has free will, so I have my work cut out for me with him. You don't get what you want by being a complete jerk, so you use a little threat, enticement, and appeal to their best natures or the part of them that wants to do good. Just like in life, you can't dominate someone and get what you want. You will only get resentment and they will try to screw you any chance they can. That's what I was trying to avoid.

Are you curious about the history behind Zachariah's host body?

I'm sure they don't have much time or inclination to do any of that, but absolutely. The relationship between the host body and what Zachariah is now is the great luxury this show has. *Supernatural* could spend all its time just developing all the interesting characters around Sam and Dean, but its mandate is really the Winchesters. I would love if they did though.

Since you are booked for the fifth season, have the producers hinted in what capacity you'll be back or for how long?

No, they haven't. They probably know, but I'm sure my character is going to die at some point. I've learned nobody who does bad things lives on shows like this! I hope it happens toward the end of the season so I get to do a few episodes and be part of the season. As it goes on and on, however it culminates, I'd like to be a part of it. I hope it's a good death. I don't do a lot of episodic television anymore, but this is one I'm really proud of. I'm shocked by the amount of people who watch it. I did *Wayne's World* years ago, which many people saw. But the movie you think people are going to stop you for isn't necessarily the one they do. From the first episode of *Supernatural* I did, people have said, "Hey, I saw you on *Supernatural*!" I'll say, "What? You watch *Supernatural*?" I don't even know if the Nielsens have it right. There might be even more of

a following than they even know. I'm shocked how many people watch it. It's fun for me. I may be the oldest actor on The CW *[laughs]*! That's something else to be proud of.

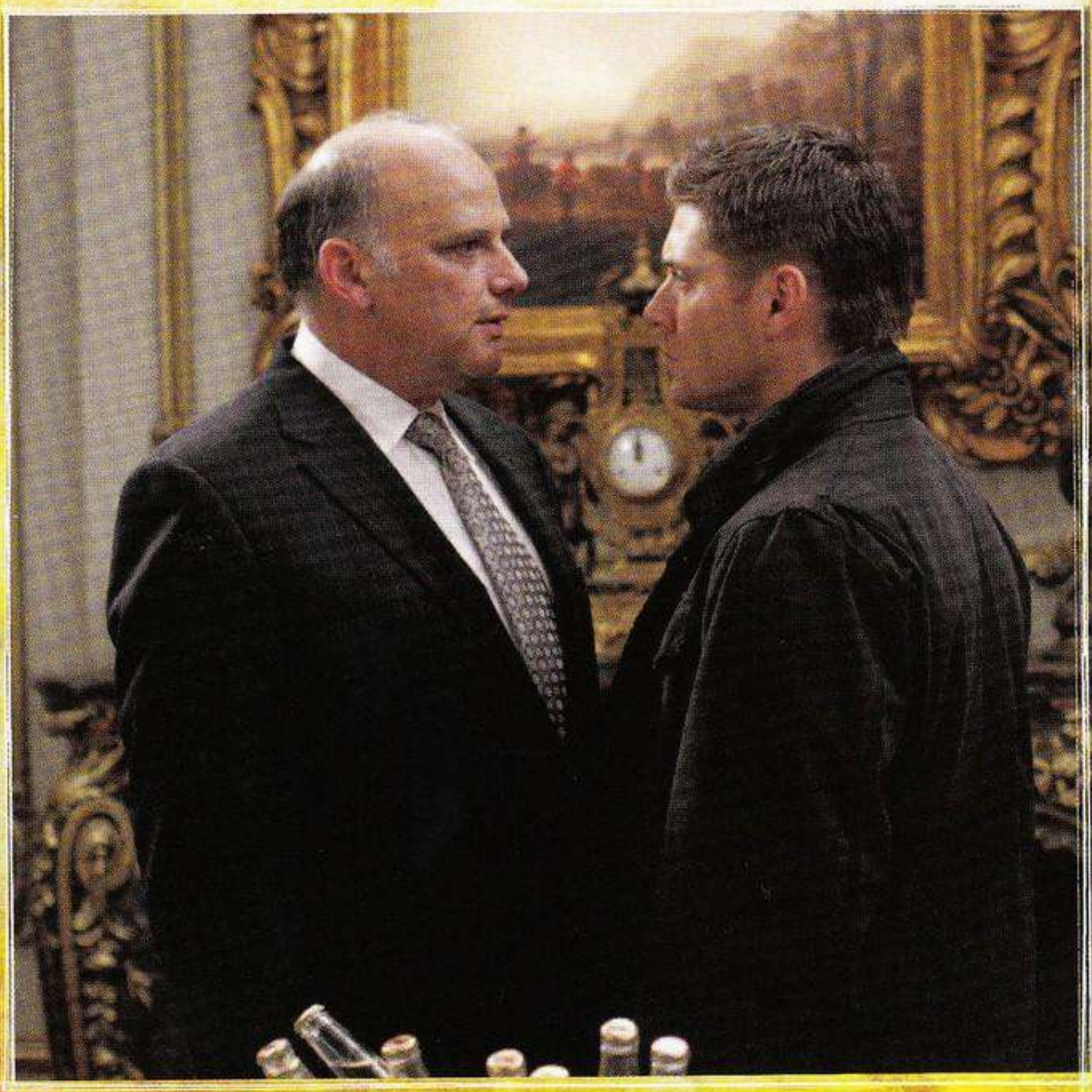
If you want a memorable death for Zachariah, maybe God should smite him.

That would be great, to meet God! It would be my pleasure.

In addition to *Supernatural*, you have the movies *The Prankster*, *The Group*, *We Got The Beat*, and *Nailed* on your plate. Which of those projects are you most excited about?

The project I'm most excited about is *Nailed*, which is directed by David O. Russell. It stars Jessica Biel, Jake Gyllenhaal, and Tracy Morgan. The movie still has three days left to shoot, and they keep threatening to finish it. It was basically like *The Wizard of Oz*, where me, Tracy, and Jessica go to Washington to meet the Wizard, who is Jake, a senator. The reason is, Jessica's character is trying to get a nail taken out of her head [that's causing her to act irrationally].

"I'M SURE MY CHARACTER IS GOING TO DIE AT SOME POINT. I'VE LEARNED THAT NOBODY WHO DOES BAD THINGS LIVES LONG ON SHOWS LIKE THIS!"



Have there been any particular Zachariah lines that have really stood out for you so far?

I loved saying, "God has left the building." That, to me, is pure Zachariah, because it works on several levels. It's a take on, "Elvis has left the building." It's snarky, funny, and, "Hey, I'm smarter than you! I've got something cooked up for you!" It's cool and yet very cold at the same time. That's Zachariah

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MISHA COLLINS
INTERVIEW

A WING AND A PR

D

AYER

From his very first appearance, Castiel – and the actor who plays him, MISHA COLLINS – have proven to be firm fan favorites, and with Castiel now a regular as of season five, that looks likely to continue. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* talked to Misha about Castiel's costume, downing beers on camera, and weird fan encounters...

Words: Jayne Nelson

Entrances on screen don't come much bigger than Castiel's in season four's *Lazarus Rising*, when the handsome angel unfolded his wings and brought with him a whole new mythology to the show. Actor Misha Collins' entrance into the world of *Supernatural* has been no less intense, with fandom going wild, and his quirky sense of humor proving a hit on Twitter and at *Supernatural* conventions worldwide.

Season five sees Collins now a show regular, and viewers are getting to watch Castiel evolve in other ways, from rebelling against his angelic masters to seeing him as a "love guru" in a potential future to him discovering more about earthly ways thanks to Dean. As Collins prepared to shoot Castiel's first scenes with Lucifer, we caught up with him to find out about his crazy time on *Supernatural* so far…

***The Official Supernatural Magazine:* A lot has happened over the past year since you joined *Supernatural*. How has it been for you so far?**

Misha Collins: It's a fantastic job to have, I'm very happy about it.

Do you feel you're part of the *Supernatural* family now?

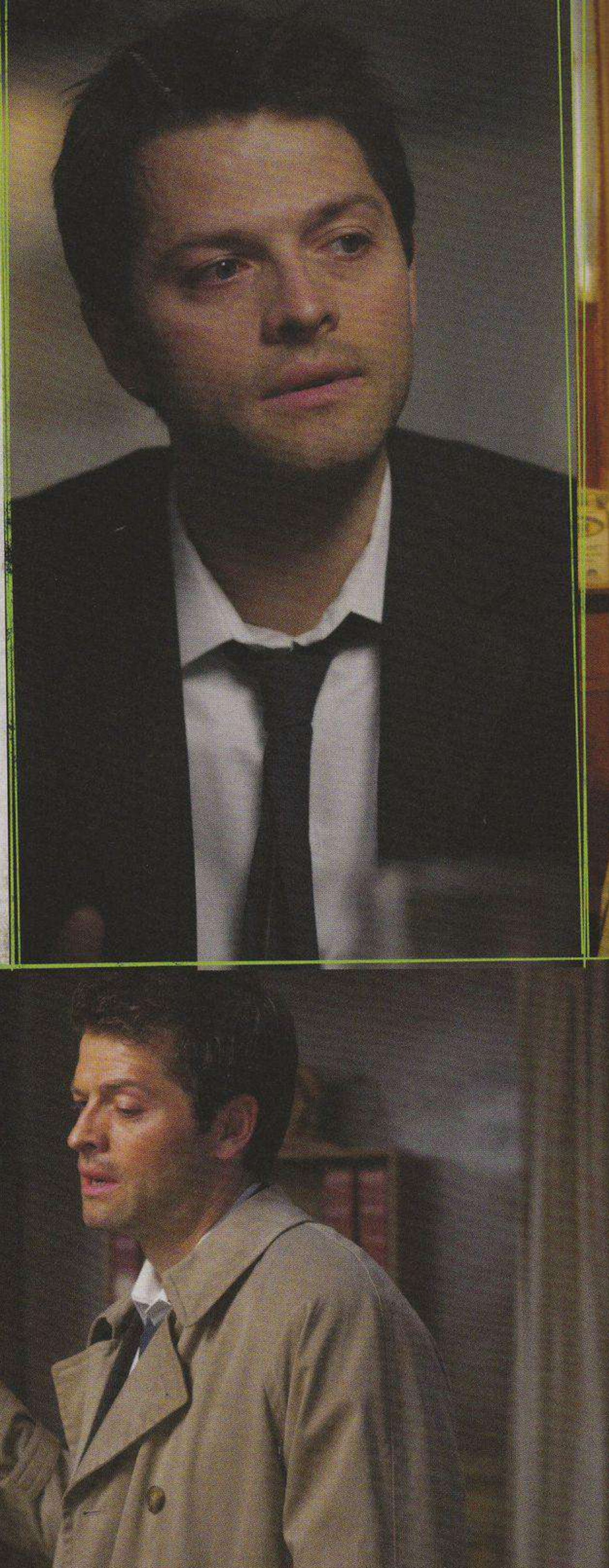
Yes, I feel like I'm a part of it. You know, it's a fairly dysfunctional family where everyone's working incredibly long hours and is often tired, but it's a great group of people to work with. I can say that without lying, which is really nice! Jared and Jensen set a good tone for the show; they work hard and are a lot of fun to work with. We have a second-unit day this season, which means basically each episode has a ninth day of shooting; last year we were shooting in eight days what we're shooting in nine days this year, and that makes a huge difference for the crew, because the hours are a lot more manageable. I think everyone is having a slightly more manageable experience!

Will Castiel go off on his own at any point, do you think?
I don't really know. We haven't done any episodes where Castiel is off on his own that much yet. There was a little bit of that at the end of season four, so I think the precedent has been set for that possibility. But we haven't really gotten into that so far this season. We're only nine episodes in, though.

Is it getting harder or easier to play him as you go along?
I think it's getting harder to play. I was expecting it to fall into place and for it to be a cakewalk, but the fact that Castiel's changing and becoming more human actually means that I have to keep on thinking about what I'm doing.

To date, most of Castiel's interaction has been with Dean. Do you think there will be any Sam and Castiel bonding coming up? After all, Sam's the one who always believed in angels.
I can't say that I've read that there's a lot of that just yet, but like I said, there's more to come. I imagine that at some point we definitely will see that, it seems like it would be too juicy a plot point to overlook, from a writer's perspective.

Have you had any scenes yet with Lucifer?
I have not. However, I will in the next episode [*Abandon All Hope*] that we shoot.



"I THINK THE OUTFIT DOES HELP ME WITH THE CHARACTER NOW, BECAUSE I JUST PUT IT ON AND AUTOMATICALLY CERTAIN THINGS HAPPEN TO MY BODY."

Do you think Castiel and Lucifer knew each other before Lucifer fell?
Definitely. I think they were old drinking buddies!

Can't you give us a hint? By the time this issue comes out, that episode will have aired...
We'd be speaking in the past tense, then. I should just tell you that I really enjoyed working with Mark Pellegrino, he's a great actor, and I think our scenes together were amazing. How about that? We haven't actually shot them yet, but... I actually worked with Mark on an independent movie years ago, but I had to remind him of the fact when I saw him on set because he'd forgotten. He was dead for much of the movie, which he did amazingly. And then he came to life [*laughs*]. He's a cool guy.

Maybe that's why he didn't remember you – he had his eyes closed because he was dead.
I remember he was in the trunk of a car and I had to poke at his fleshy bare ass for this one scene.

And he didn't remember you?
It was an odd vantage point to have on a fellow actor. Maybe it's old hat for him. It happens a lot!

Tell us about the brothel scene in *Free To Be You And Me*. Was that fun to shoot?
Every time there's a scene with a lot of half-naked women parading around the room, I feel like the scene goes smoothly. I don't know what it is; I honestly have no idea, but it always works better.

You may have been having fun, but Castiel looked terrified...
He was horrified [*laughs*].

How many times did you have to down the beer in that scene?
I had this moment of inspiration. The script said he was staring at his beer and I thought, "No, I'll down the beer!" So we shot five or six takes with the directors in another room looking at the monitors, and I downed the pint, and my stomach was starting to feel kind of bloated at that point. Then we changed camera angles and I heard the director laughing from the other room in front of the monitor. At the end of the take he said, "That was hilarious, the way you just drank that beer!" Apparently I had been sufficiently off-camera for the first five or six times that I had drunk the beer and it hadn't been captured on film at all. A complete waste! So the last couple were really tough. It wasn't real beer, it was non-alcoholic beer. All the calories and none of the fun!

In the very next episode, *The End*, you played a future Castiel who wasn't scared of women at all.
That was another room full of scantily clad women,

"JARED AND JENSEN SET A GOOD TONE FOR THE SHOW; THEY WORK HARD AND ARE A LOT OF FUN TO WORK WITH."

so it went well. It was fun to play that. I'm actually grateful that the writers have given me a couple of opportunities to play different things: Jimmy last year, where I was human, and then future Castiel. I feel pretty lucky.

How was it working with two Deans in *The End?* We can only imagine how hard Jensen worked on that episode.
That was a tough episode for him, because not only was he doing essentially eight-page scenes played against himself, he was also working against the person who was giving him his dialogue, his stuntman [Todd Scott], who's less accustomed to acting. It was really him imagining what he would do on the other side. It was quite a complex, convoluted house of mirrors for him to be operating in. He pulled it off, but he was definitely one frayed rope on that episode. I think his head was about to pop by the end.

What has happened to Jimmy, Castiel's vessel? Do you think he's still hanging around in Castiel's subconscious?
Well, I don't have final word on that, but I think he is. That's my take. He's still around. It's entirely possible that that's not true, however. I'm not the one who gets to decide these things in the end. Jimmy was a nice guy [*laughs*]. He really got screwed!

Castiel's outfit has kind of become his trademark, hasn't it? Will you be sick of wearing it by the time the show has ended?
I am sick of the suit! It's kind of perfect in that sense. It's almost a metaphor wrapped inside a metaphor. Oddly, I think the outfit does help me with the character now, because I just put it on and automatically certain things happen to my body. I immediately feel a little bit stiff. It has been indelibly printed on the character.

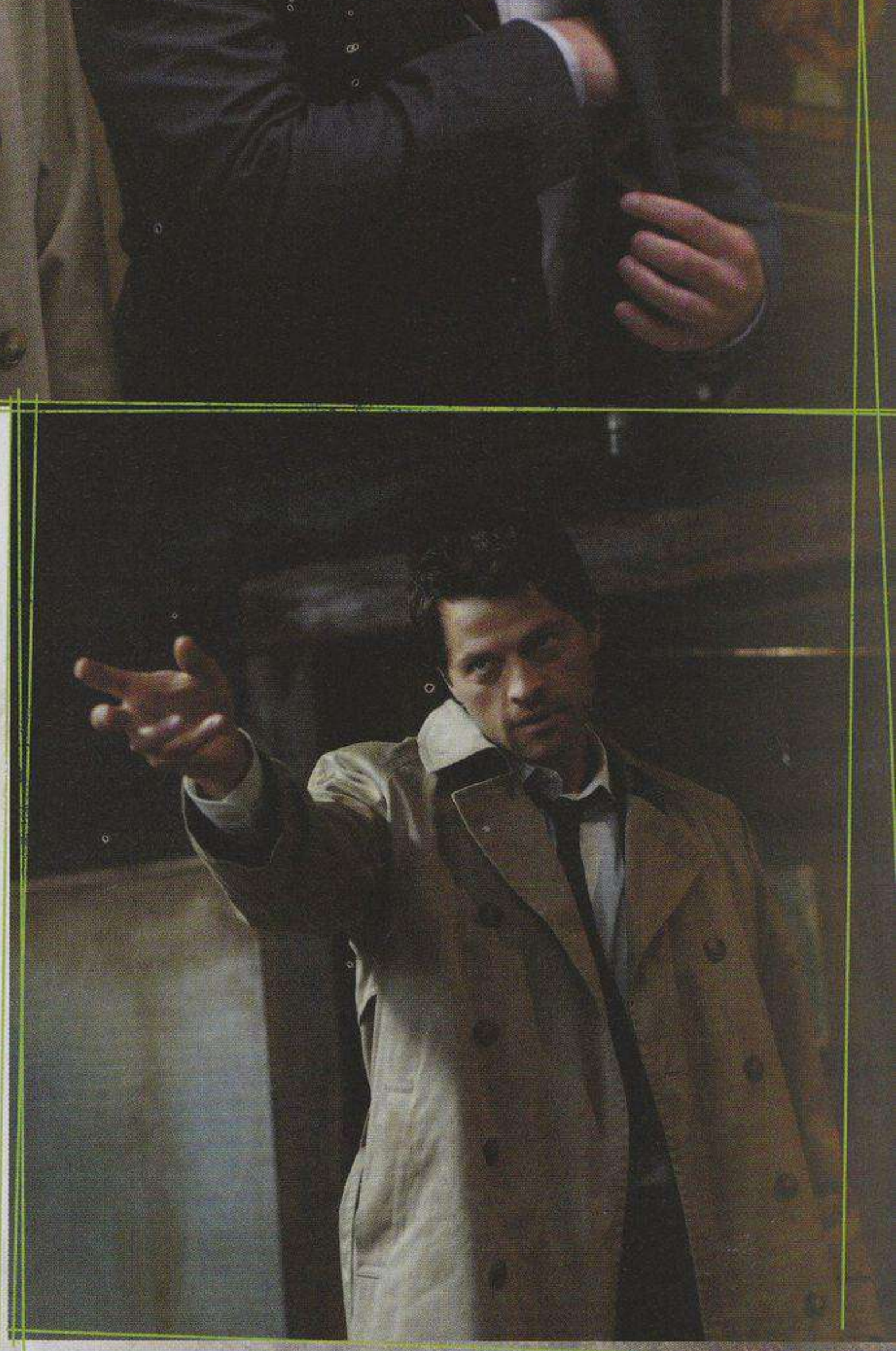
Some people have compared Castiel's look in the trenchcoat to Peter Falk's 1970s TV detective *Columbo*.
There's a movie by Wim Wenders called *Wings Of Desire*, and Peter Falk was in that. I think that Castiel was in part based on the character Bruno Ganz played in that movie, the angel named Cassiel…

"The angel of solitudes and tears." It's a great film.
It *is* a great film. If you notice in that, Cassiel was wearing an overcoat, and I think that the writers, in choosing that look, were partly drawing on that character from that movie. The parallels between *Wings Of Desire* and the fact that that

angel was named Cassiel – it's a little too much of a coincidence. Nobody's actually told me Castiel was based on that, but when I saw the movie I thought it was true.

You're very big on Twitter, aren't you? Having 26,600 followers is very impressive. Your Tweets are very funny...

Everything I write on Twitter is meant to be dead serious. Too bad that it comes across as funny. [*Laughs*] Oh well. It is kind of weird, you know? If I post something on Twitter I will immediately have 300, 400 responses, which is kind of surreal. Such a large volume of input from a large number of people all at once. A lot of it is "Oh Misha, you're so great, you're so funny," which is always kind of nice as a momentary ego boost – you can always write something not that funny and a bunch of people will write back, "You're so funny!" You can feel good about yourself for 10 minutes and then get on with your day. There have been a couple of times when I have logged on to Twitter and they're all, "Why don't you Tweet? What's wrong?" And I feel [*sighs*] "Oh, I should, they're making me feel guilty..." and then I think, "Wait a minute! I didn't sign any contract saying I was going to Tweet 'x' number of times per week! Nobody can hold me over the



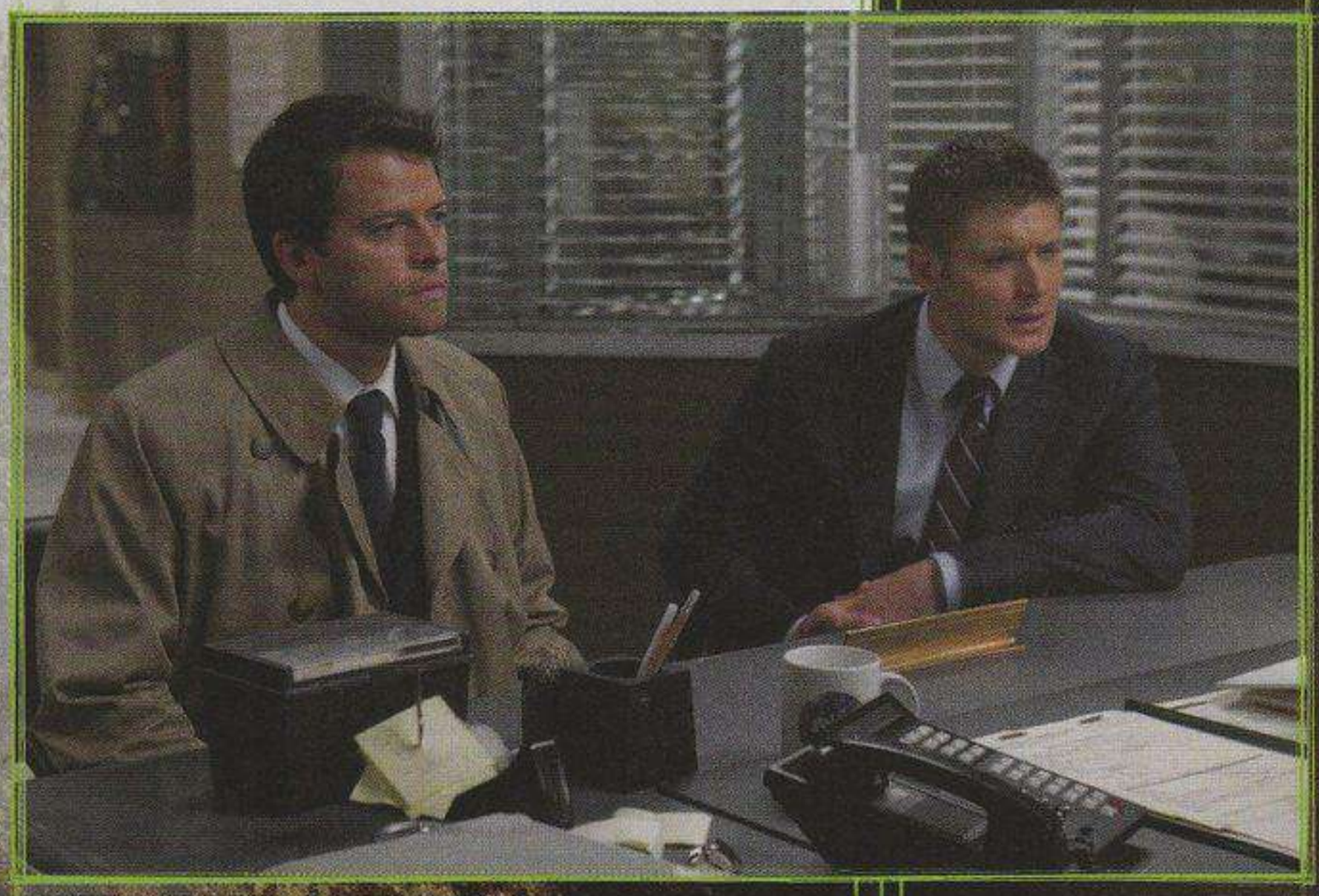
"THE BEST THING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME THIS YEAR IS HAVING AN ACTION FIGURE MADE OF MY CHARACTER..."

barrel for this! I'm a free man!" Then I'll feel guilty and think, "Oh, I'll just do one..."

Have you had any strange fan encounters yet?
Of course! There's some replies that are just long, rambling 15 different tweets from one person, one after the next, about how great our children are gonna look, things like that. And it's nice to hear, but at the same time, I dunno, I don't feel like Twitter's the best place to start a family!

Looking back over the last year, what do you think is the best thing that's happened to you because of this role?
The best thing that has happened to me this year is having an action figure made of my character [for *I Believe the Children Are The Future*]. That's definitely the best thing.

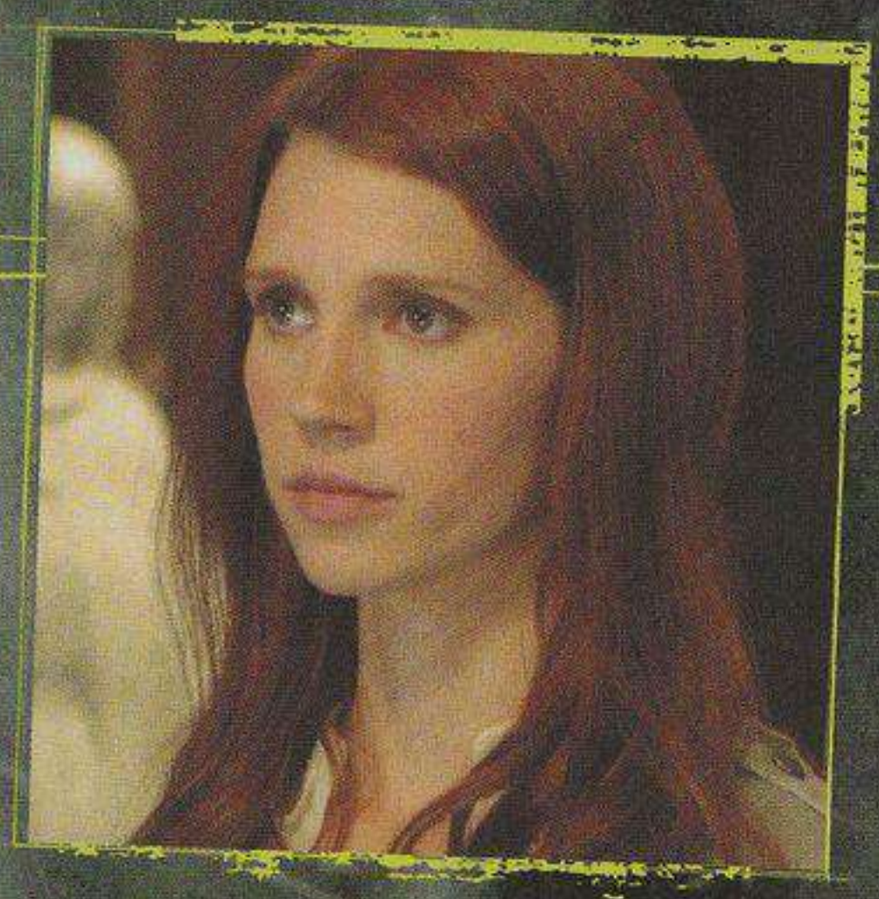
Were you allowed to take the action figure home and play with it?
No, I actually asked them if I could keep the action figure, and they said no. So ironically in the same fell swoop, it was the *best* and the *worst* thing that happened to me all year, because they wouldn't let me keep it!



INTERVIEW
JULIE
MCNIVEN

ANGEL

An angel whose fall took her right into the arms of Dean Winchester, Anna was an unpredictable character, always prepared to sacrifice innocents for the greater good. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with actress JULIE MCNIVEN to find out more about this rogue element in the Apocalypse...



Words: Nicholas Knight

When we last spoke with Julie McNiven about her role as human-loving angel Anna, she'd just exploded with Grace, her future on *Supernatural* seemingly likely, but still unknown. Since then Anna has returned four times, twice with deadly intentions. We cheered when she shanked Uriel and hissed when she tried to wipe Sam out of existence. Now McNiven brings us up-to-date with talk about everything from girdles to being smited by the Archangel Michael.

T*he Official Supernatural Magazine*: Have you heard the news? In our 2009 *Supernatural* Awards, the readers of *The Official Supernatural Magazine* voted *you* Best Female Guest Star!

Julie McNiven: That's wonderful! I'm honored. When Anna was first introduced I felt like people didn't really like me, but I feel like the reaction now – especially with you telling me today about the favorite female guest star thing – that people are responding in a much more positive way and see her as a strong female power character, which is really cool. I feel so powerful when I play Anna, I really do, especially in *The Song Remains the Same* – she's so badass!

The only time I ever felt weak as Anna was in that first episode [*I Know What You Did Last Summer*] when she was a confused mental patient, but after that I've always felt she was very strong. While some people will probably never like me – as a character or as an actor – since there are always different reasons why fans are partial to one person and not to another, I actually feel now that I've been on the show for a while that the fans are responding very positively, which is just awesome. I think Anna's always trying to do what she thinks is right. She might make hasty decisions, but she always tries her hardest to make the right ones for the good of all humanity. I mean, she tries to stop the world ending!

"I'M STILL A ROGUE ANGEL, BECAUSE APPARENTLY ALL THE OTHER ANGELS NOW WANT THE APOCALYPSE, THEY WANT THIS FIGHT."

After you'd been sent to prison in Heaven in *When the Levee Breaks*, did you think you'd be back on the show?

I was originally supposed to be in the second episode of season five [*Good God, Y'all*], but they literally had to cut about 15 pages of the script; so much stuff had to be cut for time. The easiest thing was just to take out my storyline and put it back in at another point. They knew they were going to have me back, but they had to rework things as the season went on and figure out when it was best for Anna to return.

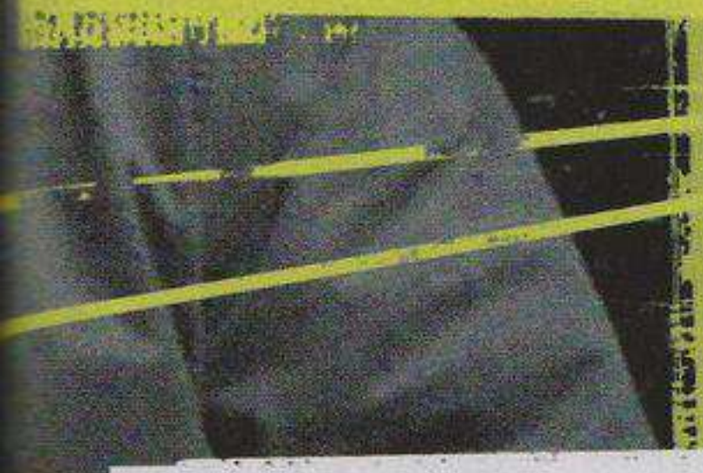
Did you approach playing the character in a different way for her return, especially since she's more "badass" now?

[*Laughs*] Well, when I say "badass," it's because I get to do things that I as Julie have never done before, but I think for Anna she's literally just thinking about what's best for the people on Earth.

I think that all of Anna's actions are motivated by what she believes to be the only solution to this Apocalypse. And in a way, it's the easiest, right? I mean, if you go and kill Mary and John, then they won't exist and they won't open that door. To Anna, this is the easiest thing to do, and she's gonna do it because she doesn't want the Apocalypse to happen. I'm still a rogue angel, because apparently all the other angels now want the Apocalypse; they want this fight. It's a little bit strange; the [different] sides have been tainted, they're not what you thought they were.

INTERVIEW
JULIE
MCNIVEN

"I FEEL SO POWERFUL WHEN I PLAY ANNA, I REALLY DO, ESPECIALLY IN *THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME* – SHE'S SO BADASS!"



Anna utilized time travel in *The Song Remains the Same*. If you had the ability to time travel, what time period would you go to?
God, I love so many time periods! I'd probably just go back 10 years at a time and just keep going back. There's not really one time period that stands out that I want to experience more than any other. I've always been fascinated with history, and as a kid I had this really old Victorian dollhouse and each room in the house was from a different decade and I just had everything to a tee, just perfectly, like the kitchen was 1920s and the living room was 1930s; I was obsessed with it. I find that one of the exciting things about being an actor is that in my career I will experience living in those time periods.

So you must really have loved that episode, as well as working on the 1960s-set *Mad Men*.
Oh yeah, definitely. And it sounds crazy, but I love the girdle that I wear for *Mad Men*. I love it! You can't eat too much for lunch unless you take it off and put it back on because it literally is so tight, but I just love it. I feel like a completely different person in it. It changes your posture, it changes the way you walk. It's fun. I know some people get annoyed with them, but I totally love them. [*Laughs*]

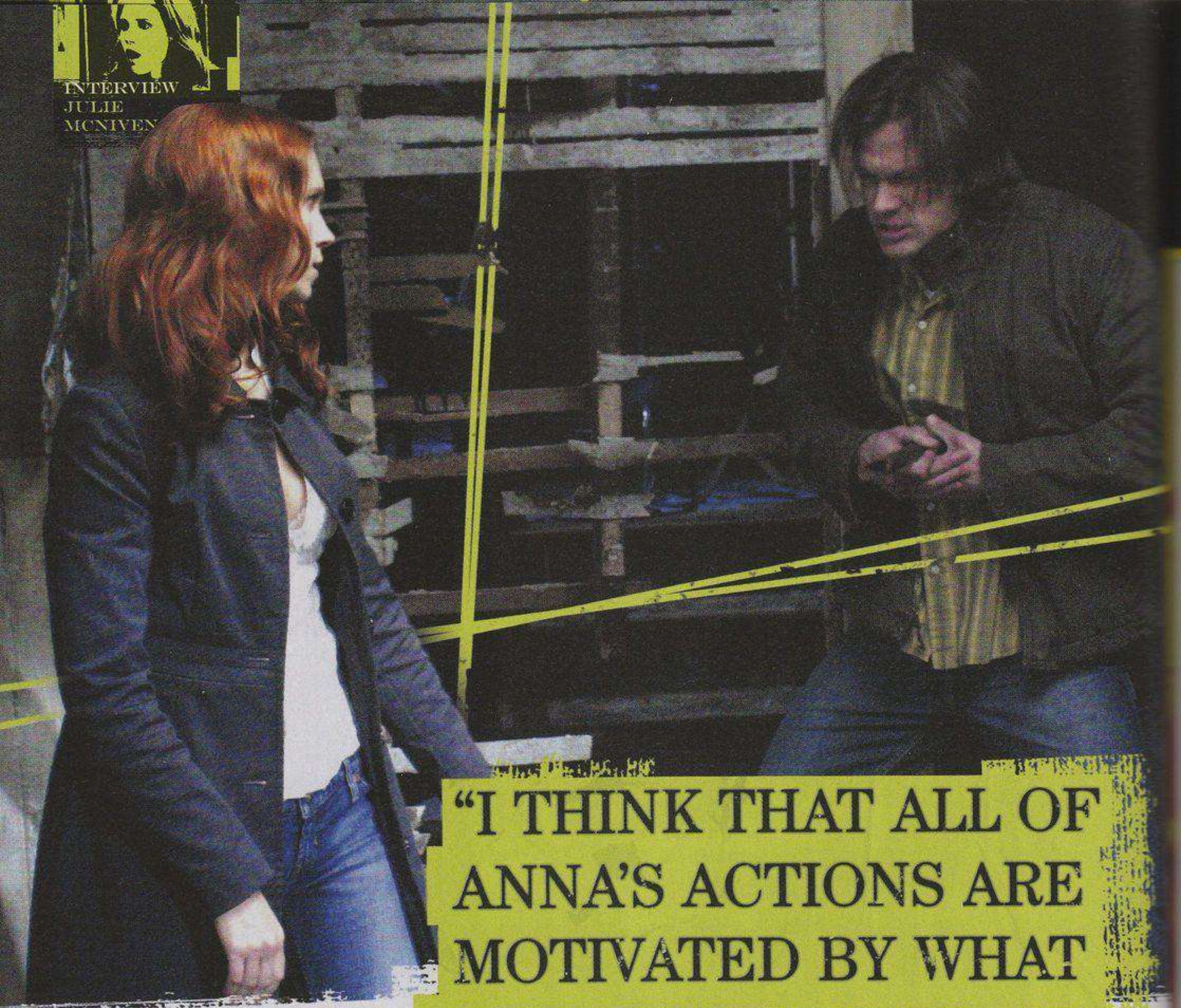
One of *Supernatural*'s writers, Cathryn Humphris, moved over to *Mad Men* – have you ever met her, and if so, did you discuss the differences between working on the two shows?
I did! Actually, I think it was one of her first episodes and she was on set with one of the writers just to experience it, so we were talking and she brought up that she'd worked on *Supernatural*. It's kind of a funny coincidence, too, because they are such different shows – you don't expect someone to go from *Supernatural* to *Mad Men*.

What's really funny is that when I work on *Mad Men*, my makeup girl is obsessed with *Supernatural*, she always wants to talk about *Supernatural*, and then when I go on *Supernatural*, my makeup and hair people are obsessed with *Mad Men*. They should switch shows for a day!

I just feel really lucky working on these shows. For *Mad Men*, I leave every table read in awe of what I just heard. The biggest thing that stands out to me in *Supernatural* is the humor. I find the show to be really funny. I mean, serious at the same time, because obviously it's the end of the world and, in every script I got for the show, the stakes were as high as they could possibly be for every single scene, but that's also what makes it fun as well. I am grateful for the writing on both of the shows.

One of the many things the *Supernatural* writers excel at is dialogue. What's your favorite line of dialogue from your episodes?
Sometimes when I sign something for fans, they want me to put in one of my lines, and I've used my really memorable line from right after I killed Uriel, where I say [in response to him saying, "There is no God!"], "Maybe. Maybe not. But there's still me." But when I was doing ADR [additional dialogue recording] for *The Song Remains the Same*, there was one line, "Sorry, it's not that easy to kill an angel," where the way that I saw myself saying it, I just loved it. I just felt like she was really powerful! It was a fun experience.

You've worked with a variety of directors on the show – Charles Beeson, J. Miller Tobin, Mike Rohl, Robert Singer, and Steve Boyum. Did their various differing styles affect your work experiences?
They were all absolutely amazing. Seriously, I did not have any bad experiences. I found that it was fun with Miller, because he would give me some extremely specific notes. Like, they only varied from the last take in the teeniest way and I found that to be fun because as an actor it's just a challenge because you're not making something completely different, it's like just the littlest change that makes a big difference on camera,



"I THINK THAT ALL OF ANNA'S ACTIONS ARE MOTIVATED BY WHAT SHE BELIEVES TO BE THE ONLY SOLUTION TO THIS APOCALYPSE."

but is so small in what you're doing as an actor. And Steve came from being a stuntman to being a director, so it was great that he was doing *The Song Remains the Same*. He was a lot of fun. But they were all so wonderful.

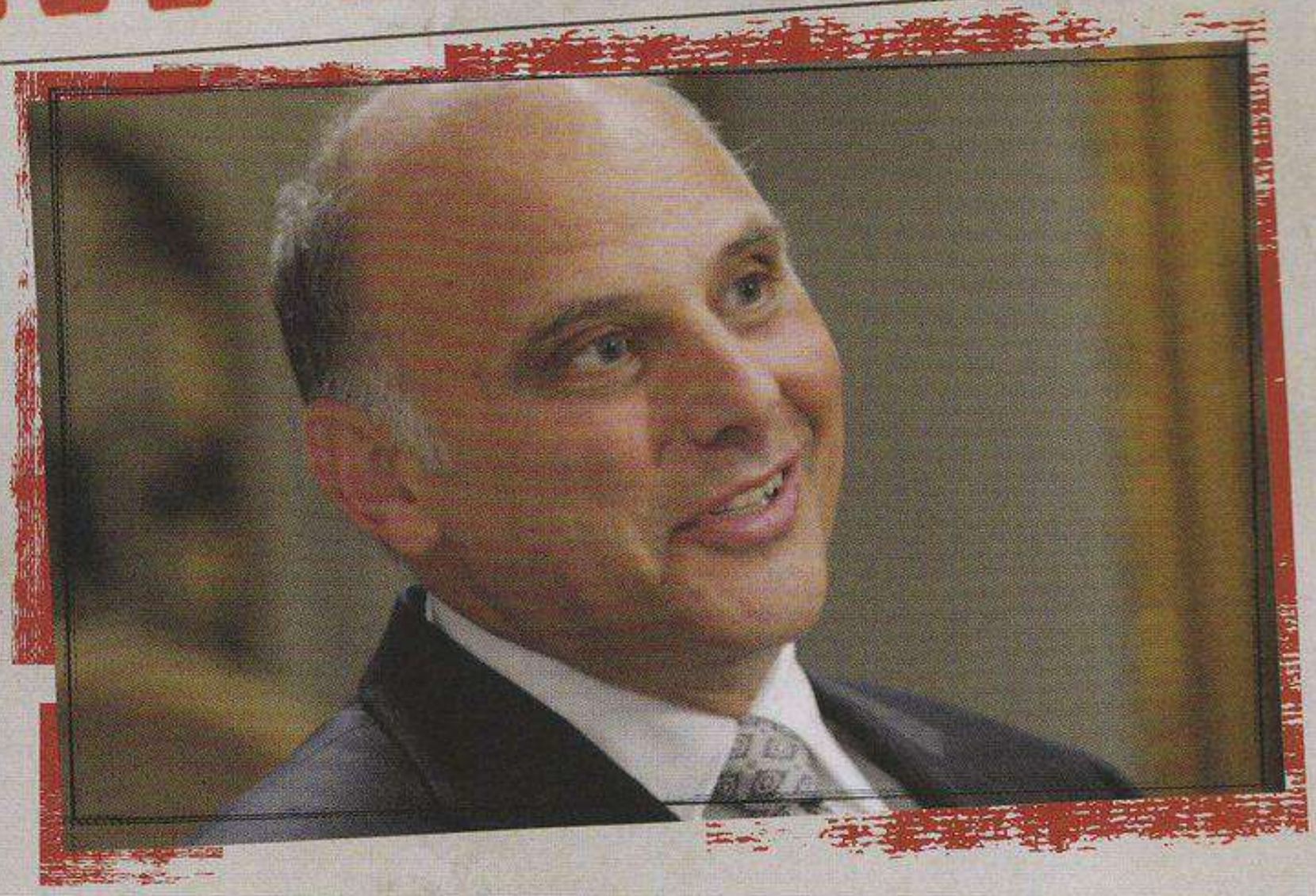
From all your episodes, what's your favorite scene?
I had so much fun doing the hand-to-hand stuff with Amy Gumenick in *The Song Remains the Same*. I'd never gotten to do that before, never had fight training, and we had so much fun doing it. I guess it makes sense that what I enjoyed most was the physical stuff, because I grew up dancing. I also had so much fun in the scene in *Heaven and Hell* where I find out that I'm an angel and I get to do all those crazy back-flips and going into a seizure and stuff. It was four hours of arching my back and screaming at the top of my lungs, and I totally loved it! [*Laughs*]

What did you think of the visual effects for Anna's death scene?
I first saw the visual effects when I was in ADR because I had to add in some extra painful noises. And I was so sad because [I was turned to] ash! It was cool to see it. I feel like I'm a 12-year-old or something when I see that stuff, because it's just really cool to see the fire coming out of my eyes and all that. They made it look really good.

Anna's big CGI'ed Grace explosion was how she started on the show, like that CGI part was my first bookend, and now I feel like I'm being CGI'ed again in a slightly different way to end with a bookend there. But this *is Supernatural*, so hopefully that's not *truly* the end for me!

DEJA VIEW KURT FULLER

Words: Nicholas Knight



Zachariah is a powerful angel – in the hierarchy of Heaven, he falls somewhere between the archangels and Castiel – but for all intents and purposes his role in the Apocalypse is as a salesman... and no matter how hard he tries, he just can't close the deal. We didn't need a ring of holy fire to get actor Kurt Fuller to talk to us about his increasingly sadistic character, but he did ask that we share a suggestion for how to get him back on the show...

The Official Supernatural Magazine: The last time you spoke with _The Official Supernatural Magazine_, you said, "I'm still wondering what episode I'm going to get killed in..." Unfortunately, you need wonder no longer. Obviously you saw it coming, but were you still disappointed when you found out they were killing you off in _Point of No Return_?

Kurt Fuller: I gotta tell ya, it was very, very upsetting. I knew that I was gonna die because when characters go bad, they never have a good end. But the character was written with such dimension – he wasn't just a bad guy, he really had his ups and downs – and when you play a character like that, you grow attached. They really do become a part of you. Not to get too maudlin or sentimental, but part of me died.

Well, at least that part of you will live forever on DVD. Looking back at all your episodes, which one was your favorite?

Sympathy for the Devil, where I meet the boys in the storage locker, was my favorite because I love that Castiel kicked ass. I loved watching that. And I loved being afraid of him there. In fact, I thought it was going to be Castiel that would kill me – that was always my prediction. And I loved being able to very causally go "bang" with my hand and Sam falls. It felt so otherworldly and powerful. It was a very satisfying scene to do, which probably tells you a lot about me. I felt like Zachariah as a character was at the height of his powers in that episode. He was confident, believed without a doubt that he was going to get what he wanted, and could affect people with just a look or a touch or a breath. That was him at his best, and after that it was all downhill for him; a long slide to death...

Speaking of Zachariah's death, just before your death scene, was it fun to build up Zach's fury and get right in Jensen's face?

Oh, yeah, it's really fun to get up in Jensen's face. He's so handsome, he's got so much hair, he's got everything I don't have and so I can just use that. Whenever I really want to get mad at Dean, I just look at his hair. God, his hair is so perfect... and it really does piss me off! [*Laughs*] And Dean makes fun of my hair all the time, like in *Dark Side of the Moon* he calls me old and bald and I say, "In Heaven, I have six wings and four heads, one of which is a lion." That was my favorite line in the whole thing.

When you read that line in the script, were you hoping there'd be a flash of visual effects showing you in your true form?

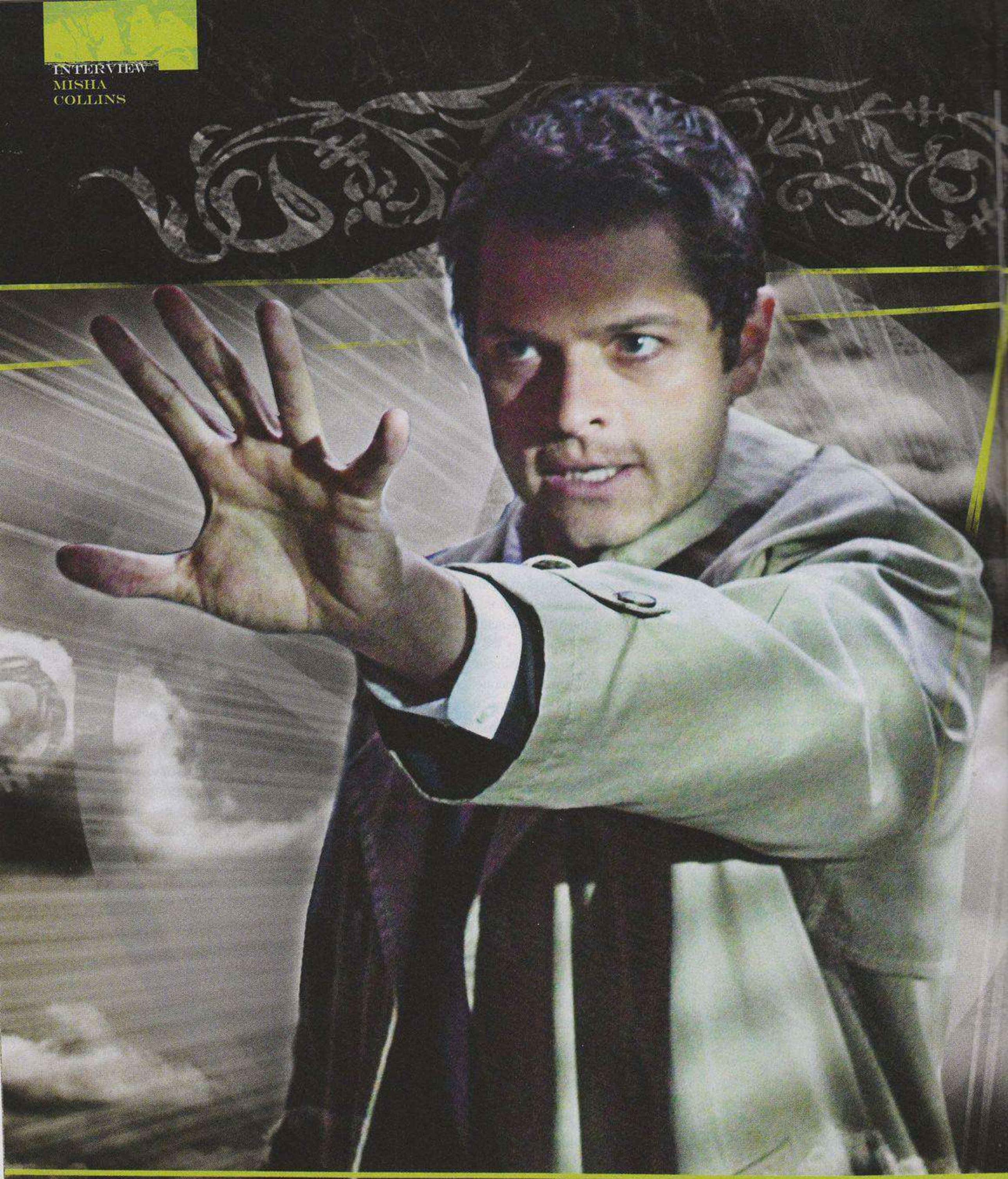
Yes, I was! When I said one of them was a lion, I did this whole thing with my hair, like I had big hair, although I don't think I'm going to get any help from anybody on that. But I was glad to know that one of my heads was a lion, believe me.

If you're reincarnated on the show, would you like to come back as a lion, perhaps a lion of legend like the Nemean Lion?

No, they should reincarnate Zach as a human being. His karma is that he's lost all his angel powers, and he still has all that sad, evil stuff inside of him, but he's completely impotent.

What has the fan response been like for Zachariah? Do you expect there to be a "bring back Zach" campaign?

Yes! Killing me was the biggest mistake they ever made! Actually, I think for a guy as despicable as Zach, the response has been that they love to hate me. I was a good bad guy, Zachariah is entertaining enough for people to like, but I don't think the fans are upset that I'm dead.

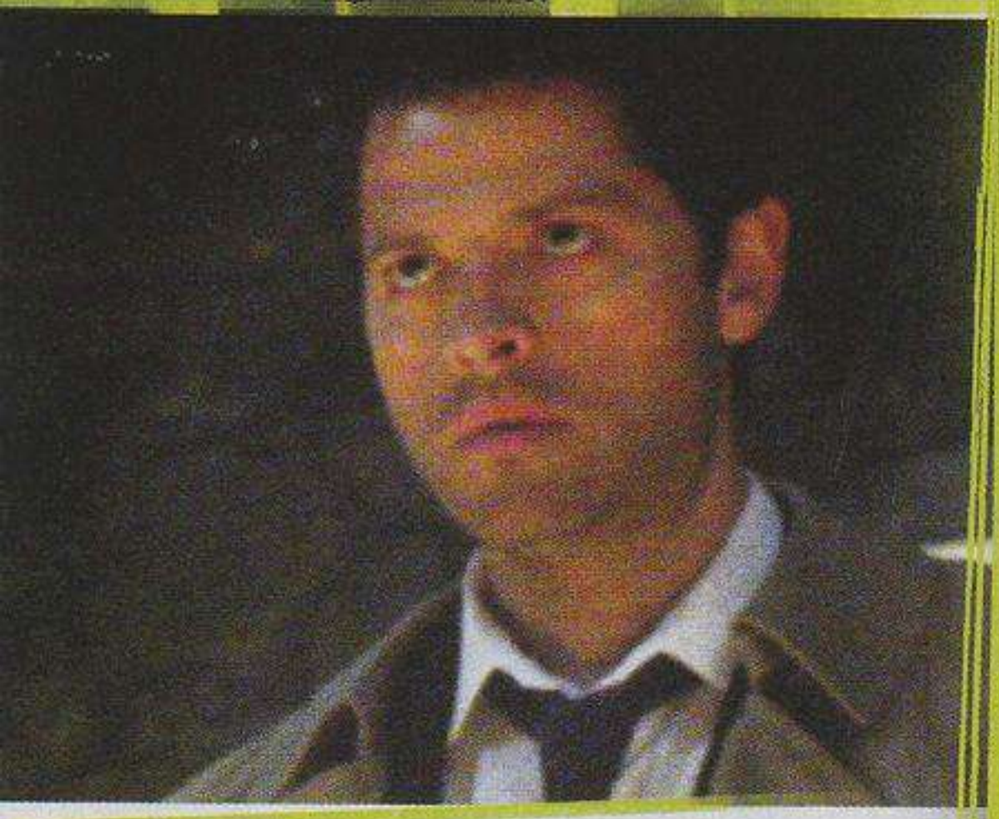


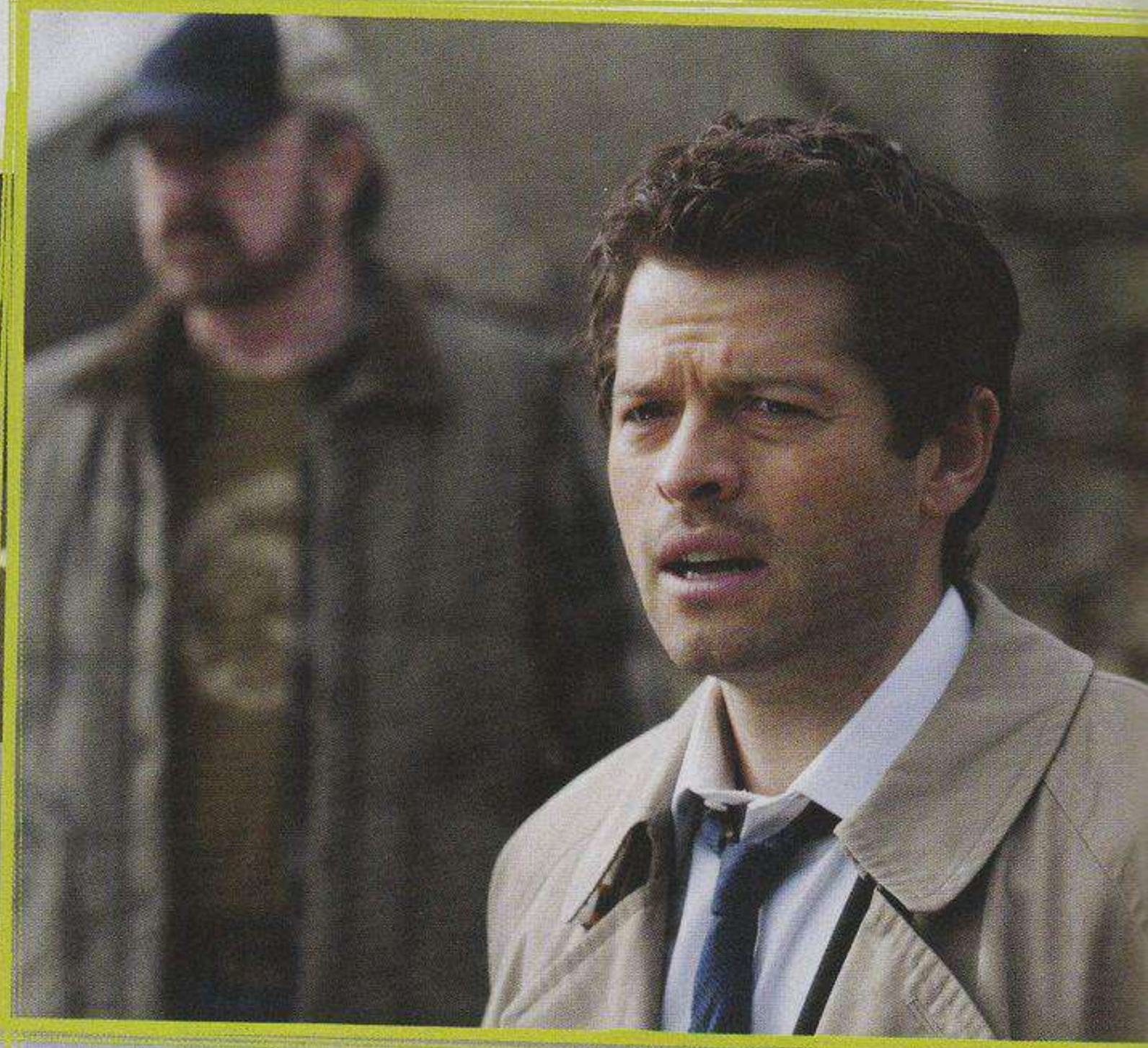
Words: Nicholas Knight

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

He's survived death by explosion twice, so it's safe to say Castiel is a tougher angel to kill than most. Fans wouldn't have it any other way of course, as Castiel's been a favorite since his first appearance. We caught up with actor Misha Collins to talk about his divine character...

Castiel started off season five dead, splattered all over Chuck's living room. Then, after being resurrected by God, he suffered ever-diminishing angel powers, insatiable hamburger cravings, and various other afflictions of the human condition. Then Lucifer popped him like a blood-filled balloon. To say he had a run of bad luck would be an understatement. But while Dean proved destiny is only a given if you give in to it, perhaps there is such a thing as karma, because Castiel certainly seems to have been rewarded for fighting the good fight. Not only was he resurrected again, but this time with full angel powers. He's so supercharged at the end of season five that it's safe to say anything's possible for him in season six. What role angels will play in the post-Apocalypse remains to be seen, but there's no doubt this fan favorite will return. Misha Collins discusses his character's highs and lows, and ponders what his newfound powers will lead to...





***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: What did you think of the way the Apocalypse developed?**

Misha Collins: I think from a storytelling standpoint, what's interesting is what they did on the show with these mythic characters like Satan and the archangels and that sort of thing, the way they grounded them in human dynamics. They're members of families. Satan is talking to his brother, the archangel Michael, so there are parallels between Sam and Dean. The family dynamic makes them not just abstract characters, but actually human-like characters that have qualities that we can relate to. It's like Satan and Michael are motivated by the same things that would motivate any sibling rivalry.

A lot of shows, especially shows that get into the supernatural realm, deal with really complicated mythology that becomes this top heavy albatross that they can't work their way out of, and it gets confusing for the audience. But *Supernatural*, instead of biting off more than it can chew, uses as its five-season arc this relationship between two brothers. It's a very simple, very easy to relate to dynamic that's the through-line of the show. Then you can have little detours like the Apocalypse.

Do you think there really is a supernatural realm with God, the Devil, and all that?

I believe that we live in a strange and mystical universe with a lot of unexplained and unexplainable phenomena going on in it. I'm not a follower of the literal letter of the Bible, but I think that there are a lot of mysterious things going on out there.

More specifically, do you believe angels exist for real?

I don't know if I believe in the sort of traditional representation of angels or the kind you see on *Supernatural*, but I think there are presences out there in the universe that are beyond an ordinary human being's powers or perception that are forces of benevolence. I'm open to that. I'm optimistic.

Assuming they are indeed benevolent, if one wanted to possess you as its vessel, would you let it?

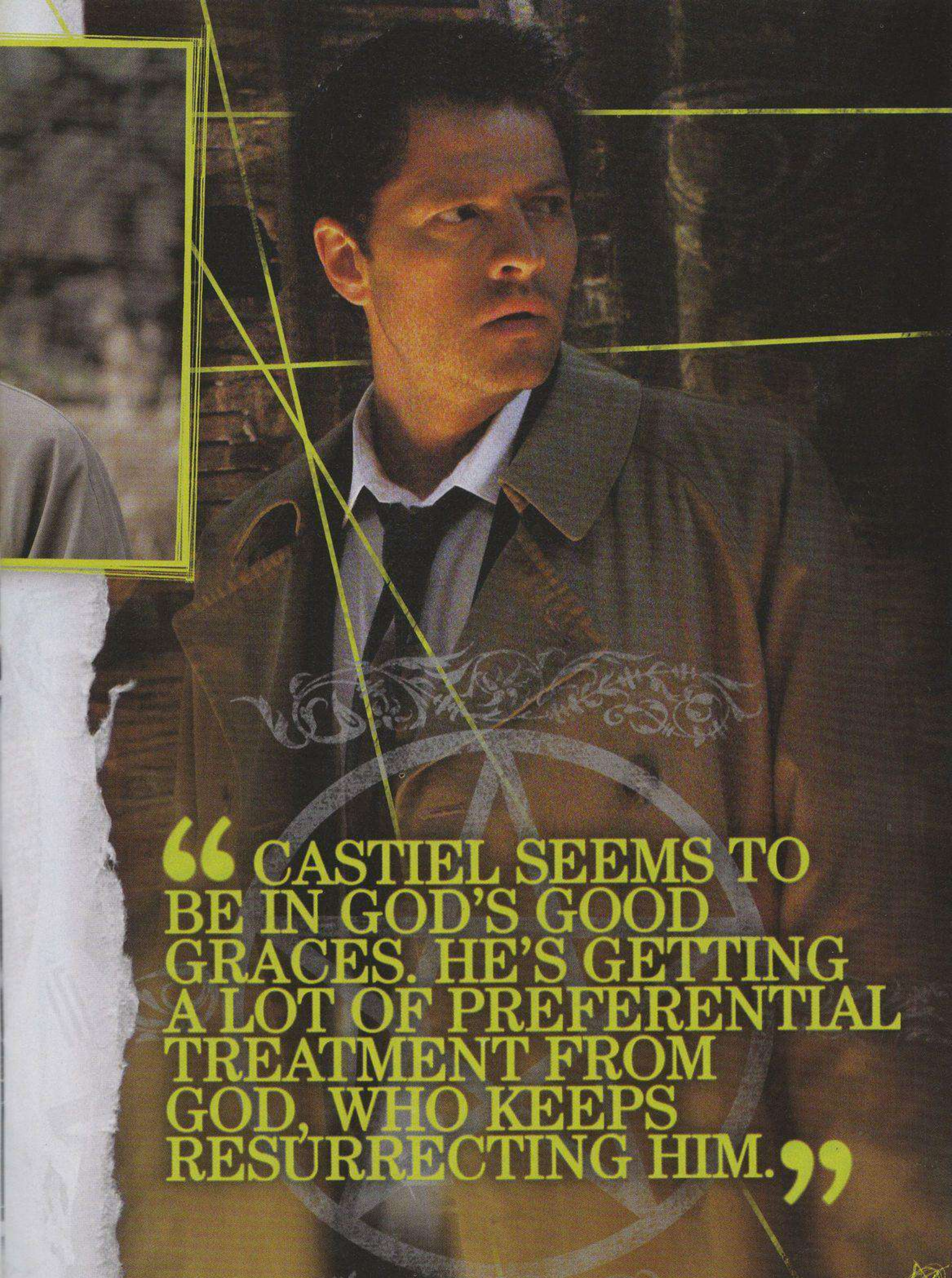
I don't know. It depends on what they're offering. I mean, if I was going to be given superhuman powers and got to retain my personality, then I'd go for it, but if I was just going to be a vehicle for someone else and give up my meatsuit, I would probably say no. Actually, I would *definitely* say no in that case, because it'd be sucky to be that; you're relegated to being just the voice in someone's head, which doesn't sound that great. I've got enough voices in my own head; I don't want to be a voice in someone else's head.

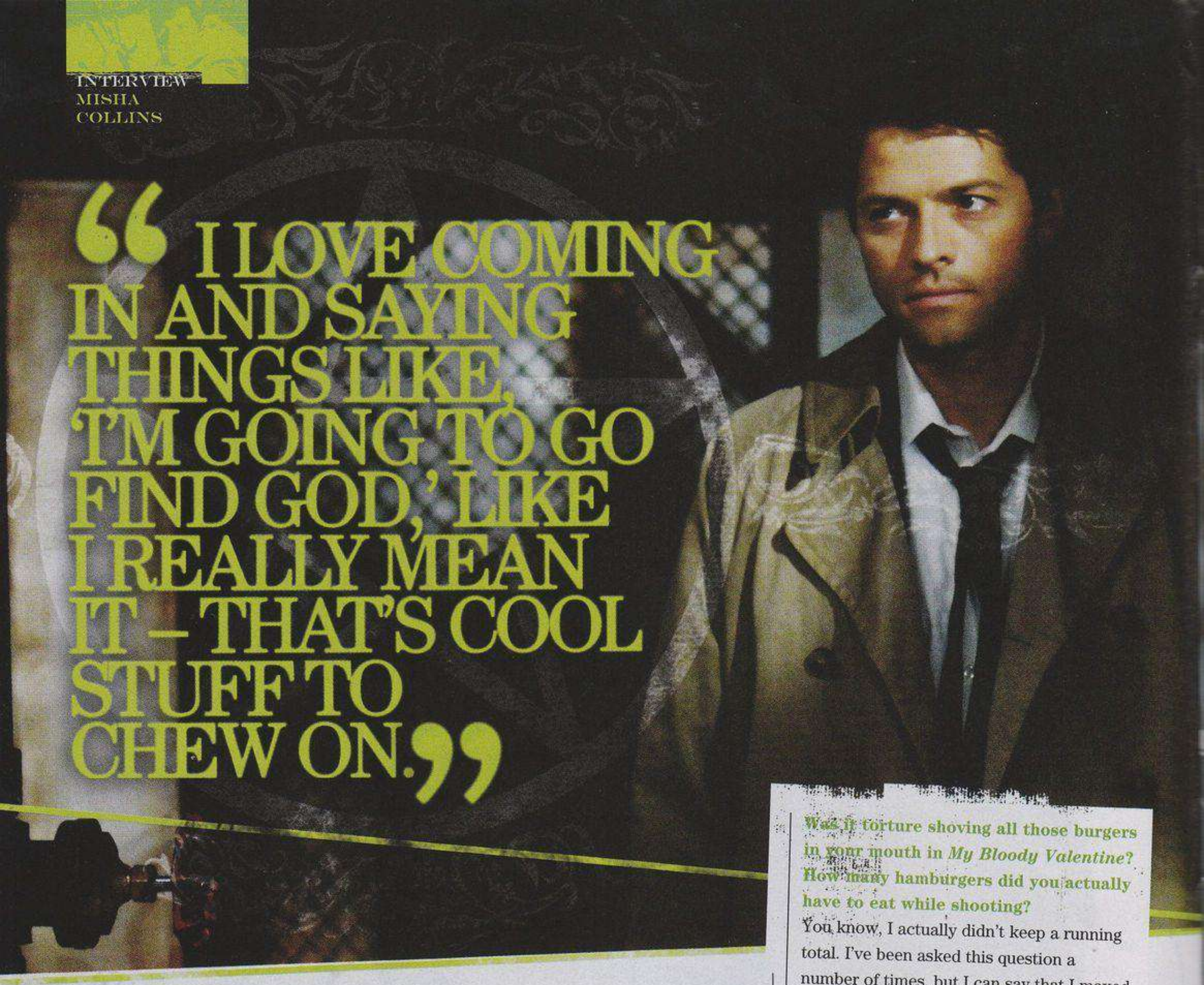
That does sound horrible – horrifying actually. Having worked on a horror show for two seasons, do you have any insight into why people around the world love to be scared?

I've often wondered that. I can't watch horror movies – I get scared. I went out with a bunch of friends during college to watch the movie *Seven* and I literally had to crawl between the rows of seats and cover my ears because it was just terrifying for me. When I was catching up on *Supernatural* to find out what happened before Castiel was introduced, I'd sit down in the evening and watch three or four episodes... and then have nightmares! Even now that I'm on it and have read the scripts, when I watch it, it still scares me. I've often reflected on this question, "Why do people like to be scared?" I think there's some primal adrenaline rush that you get from being frightened. It's exhilarating; it makes you feel alive.

Obviously a large number of *Supernatural* fans enjoy the scares that come with the show. What have your experiences with the fans been like – scary or otherwise?

Kind of amazing. I've never been on a sci-fi show before, and I've never had exposure to science-fiction fans. I had some


“CASTIEL SEEMS TO BE IN GOD’S GOOD GRACES. HE’S GETTING A LOT OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM GOD, WHO KEEPS RESURRECTING HIM.”



"I LOVE COMING IN AND SAYING THINGS LIKE, 'I'M GOING TO GO FIND GOD,' LIKE I REALLY MEAN IT – THAT'S COOL STUFF TO CHEW ON."

preconceived notions that they would be freakish and off-putting, but in general I've been amazed by how sweet and endearing and cool our fanbase is. Someone told me, and I don't know if it's true or not, but our show is the biggest in the world right now for television series having fan conventions.

Have you ever had any strange encounters with fans?

I've seen people with tattoos of my character's name on them. Things like that. It's a little weird.

Which would you say was your favorite episode of season five?

The stories are so varied that I would be hard-pressed to pick one that is really my favorite. There's just a lot of great stuff. I love coming in and saying things like, "I'm going to go find God," like I really mean it – that's cool stuff to chew on.

Oh, and I got to beat Dean up in *Point of No Return*. That was fun. Sort of just living out a personal fantasy on camera... [*Laughs*]

Speaking of *Point of No Return*, when Castiel carved that Enochian sigil into his chest, where did he go?

I'm not sure. I have a feeling that when angels are blasted away, they're blasted away to somewhere on the perimeter of Heaven, and then they have to find their way back to wherever they'd been.

Likewise, where did Gabriel stash Castiel in *Changing Channels*?

I saw him being tortured by angel goons somewhere in the ethereal realm. I didn't come up with something terribly creative, although I do remember we were bantering about all sorts of different ideas; various miserable torture techniques that Castiel was forced to endure.

Was it torture shoving all those burgers in your mouth in *My Bloody Valentine*? How many hamburgers did you actually have to eat while shooting?

You know, I actually didn't keep a running total. I've been asked this question a number of times, but I can say that I maxed out at about five in the first big eating scene that we did. That was pretty awful. After that I did my best to really dial it back and to figure out ways to make it look like I was eating more than I was. I'm definitely put off by uncooked vegetarian ground round about now, I can tell you that much!

Another interesting thing we learned about Castiel in that episode is that he can read other angels' minds – at least the minds of lower orders of angels like cherubs, third class.

Yes, I can read minds! I did not previously know that. We keep on discovering new powers we never knew Cass had.

What did you think of Castiel losing all his powers in *Two Minutes to Midnight*?

I think that it's kinda nice. When I started, it was good to be an angel on *Supernatural*

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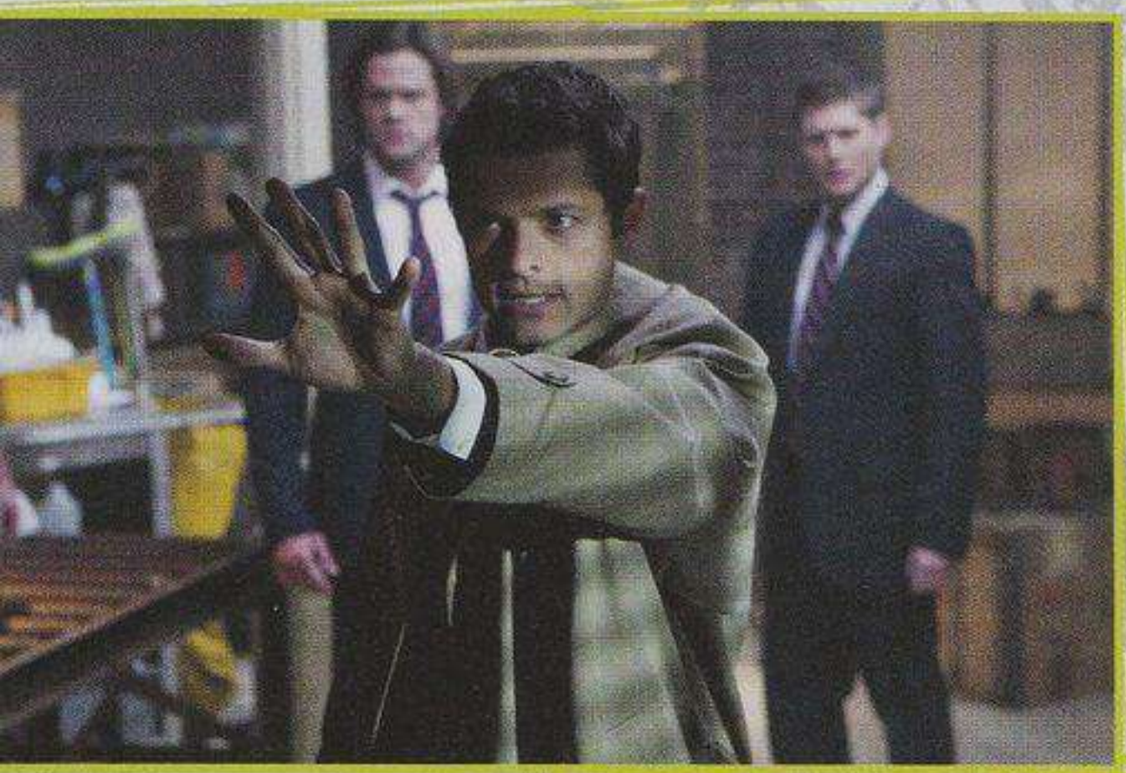


"WHEN I WAS CATCHING UP ON *SUPERNATURAL* TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE CASTIEL WAS INTRODUCED, I'D SIT DOWN IN THE EVENING AND WATCH THREE OR FOUR EPISODES... AND THEN HAVE NIGHTMARES!"

because I got to stand out a little bit – demons were a-dime-a-dozen. Now there've been so many angels on the show, it's kinda watered down too. The only way to stand out on *Supernatural* these days is to be a human. There don't seem to be that many of them anymore!

Well, then, did you enjoy essentially playing a human hunter in that episode?

I did! There's something about that that's interesting; it's like Castiel's actually vulnerable in a way that he hasn't been before, which ironically makes him a little bit more badass, because when you're no longer virtually immortal, when you do something risky, it's actually *risky*. That was cool.

Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles are well known for enjoying the action scenes, getting physical, and doing as many of their own stunts as possible. Are you the same way?

Honestly, that is not true for me. Because it gets so technical, you're not actually fighting. You're pretending to fight, and you're calibrating by inches just to accommodate a camera angle.

Along with their athleticism and enjoyment of stunts, the boys are of course also known for their pranks. Have they pulled any on you lately? Or vice versa?

I'm the one who gets pranked more often than not, and more often than not the pranks are just things like Jared grabbing my ass below camera frame, during my close-up. I have to make that split-second decision: Do I ruin the take? Just step out of the scene and be like, "Uh, I can't work with this..." Or do I plow through and do a bad take that ends up in the episode? Which is what I usually choose.

What are your predictions for Castiel's involvement in season six?

I have no idea. He's heading back to Heaven to try to clean up the mess there. There's a lot of clean up that you have to do after the Apocalypse [in Heaven and on Earth]. That's a whole season right there: damage control. And Castiel seems to be in God's good graces. He's getting a lot of preferential treatment from God, who keeps resurrecting him, so I wonder if all that power's going to go to his head?

Do you have any other highlights of your time on the show so far that you'd like to share?

On the last night of shooting [season five] for me, Jared, Jensen, and I were having a beer in Jensen's trailer and just reflecting on what a great crew and cast we have on *Supernatural*. It really does have a family feeling, and everyone who's there is really happy to be working in that environment with those people. That's a pretty rare thing to have. I can honestly say that I feel pretty lucky to be a part of the show.

Where Angels Fear to Tread

With his rock-star lifestyle, his purloining of Biblical artifacts, and his collection of souls, Balthazar is far from your usual angel. Balthazar was brought to the screen in the episode *The Third Man* by actor Sebastian Roché, and *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with him on a visit to London to find out more about Castiel's old friend...

The Official Supernatural Magazine: Had you watched *Supernatural* before being cast in it?

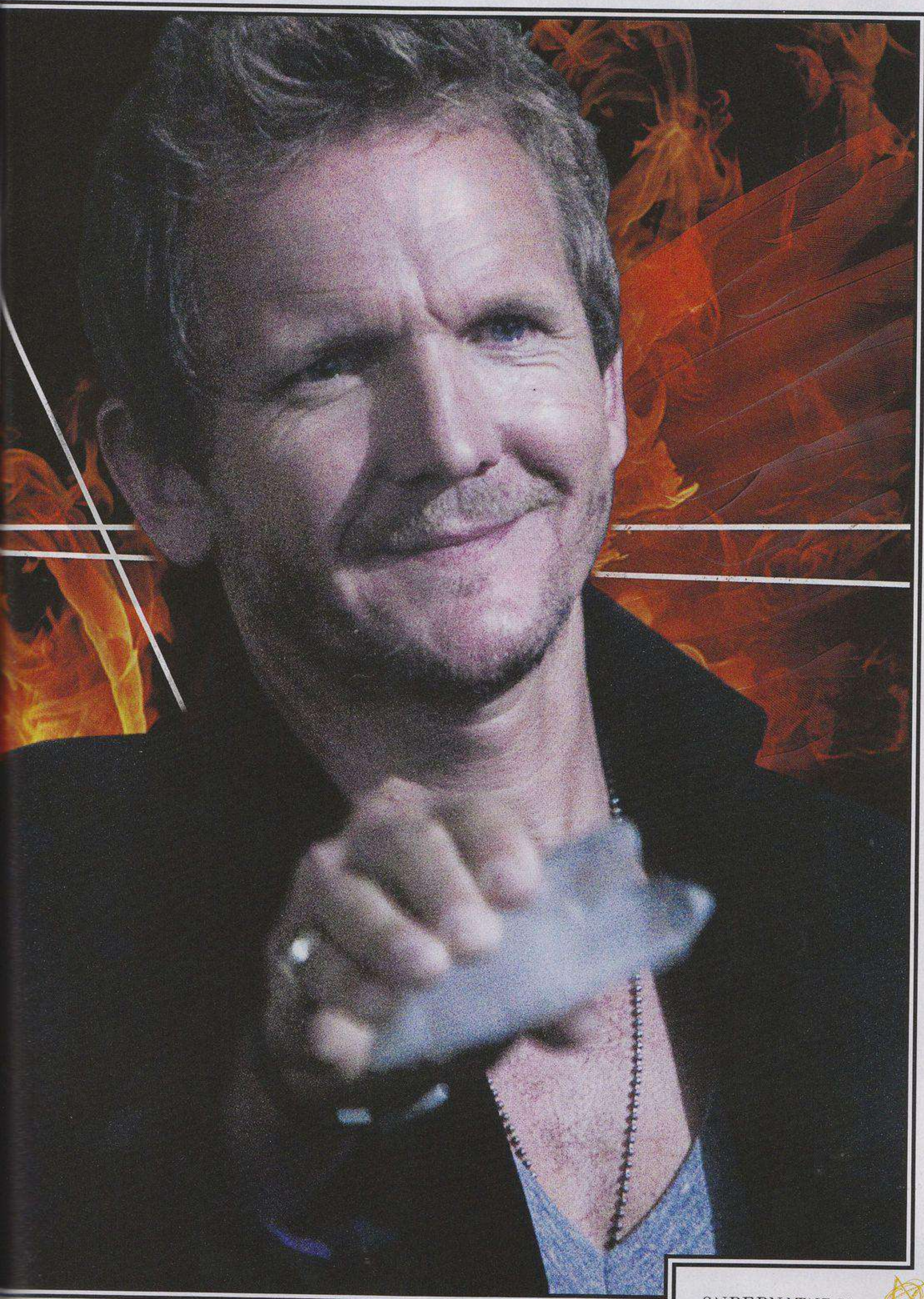
Sebastian Roché: I'd watched a few episodes. I'm not really a [regular] episode-watcher myself of anything. But I'd watched the show.

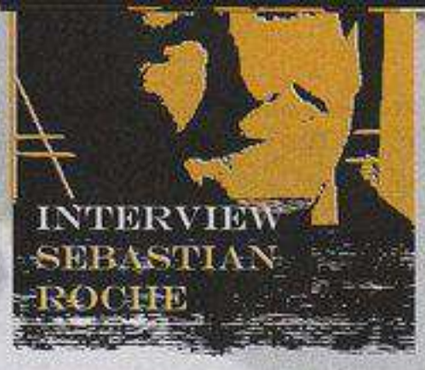
How was your audition for the role of Balthazar?

It was so funny, because I was a bit nervous when I auditioned, so my first run at it I was a bit too fast. At one point [executive producer and director] Robert Singer said, "I've never said this to an actor, but can you slow it down, please?" [*Laughs*] Because actors always want to take it slow and take their time... As soon as he said that, I thought, "Okay, relax." I wasn't *that* nervous, but I was going too fast. Just that one note, that's when you know a good director; he doesn't give you too much direction. He just tells you to slow it down and it clicks in your brain and you've got it.

How would you describe Balthazar?

He's very witty. He's kind of a sexy, witty, decadent guy: "I just had a ménage a... how do you say 12 in French?" Balthazar's sort of the Anti-Castiel. He's a little naughty. He's not bad, but he's *naughty*. Although I'm not sure if he's bad yet. I've yet to see what they do when I come back!





"I DON'T THINK HE'S A BAD GUY – I THINK HE SEES AN OPPORTUNITY AND TAKES IT."

In the script for the episode Balthazar was described as a "Mick Jagger" type – was that how you played him?
I sort of played him like me, I'm kind of rock 'n' roll. Boots and tight jeans and [*affects languid British drawl*] "Hello, darling. Cass! How are you?" I didn't want to go [full on] earrings and rock star. Maybe in the next episode, who knows? I kept him very debonair, a rock 'n' roll James Bond. But we'll see if it worked!

Do you think Balthazar is a good guy or a bad guy?
I don't know. It seems like he's taking advantage of his powers. I don't think he's a bad guy – I think he sees an opportunity and takes it. He's much more mercurial than Castiel. He's more of a believer in the beauties of life. He's an epicurean angel, I'd say; a lover of the good things in life.

Did you get a chance to bond with Misha Collins beforehand? Did he say, "This is how I play an angel, I don't know what you're going to do..."
Well, he plays Castiel very seriously. He said, "I haven't changed in three years. The costume's always the same!" I was like, "Well, I'm gonna be changing mine!" The costume designer [Diane Widas] on *Supernatural* said, "Great, we're gonna find you costumes, we're going to change you every time, it's going to be fun!" She had really good taste, actually. She got me tight jeans, boots... a bit like this [*indicates his current outfit*]. I'm not wearing leather in [the episode], I'm wearing velvet, this kind of Hugo Boss jacket. With this T-shirt, actually.

"I'D AUDITIONED FOR CROWLEY AND I'D AUDITIONED FOR LUCIFER [BEFORE BEING CAST AS BALTHAZAR]. I WAS LIKE, 'AM I EVER GONNA GET ON SUPERNATURAL?"

She saw this T-shirt on me and bought some!

We can see why they cast you...
They cast me as me, basically!

What kind of characters do you usually play?
On *Fringe* I play Thomas Jerome Newton, who's very controlled, evil... although I've tried to lighten him up a bit this year. But he is pure doom, pure chaos. I often play really bad guys. Even on this soap I did [*General Hospital*], I played this evil guy called Jerry Jacks. I try to infuse humor wherever I can; Newton isn't so humorous as he's a soldier from another dimension. I do play bad guys, yeah. Though I just did this movie for Syfy which is a take on *Clash Of The Titans*, and I played the lead, so I'm the hero for once! But I always play the tough, Russell Crowe-ish guy. If I'm a good guy I'm the tough, heroic type. I won't be the romantic leading man. Not yet.

***Fringe* shoots in Vancouver just like *Supernatural*, doesn't it?**
It was really great, actually – I was in Vancouver shooting *Fringe*, and my manager said, "Go into *Supernatural*," and I went in, read with Robert Singer, who was lovely, and it worked out. It was amazing. It was just a joy to work on! Robert was brilliant,

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really kind, and we had a great time. Misha's great too, he's really wonderful. Misha and I had a really good chemistry, I think. He's so funny! His character's much more earnest in the series, but he's so witty. He's got that quick, dry wit. He's a very intelligent guy.

How about a spin-off?
That would be amazing. *Cassie & Balthy*! [*Laughs*] It would be great to do more, because I liked the character instantly. I felt comfortable with it, instantly. He's got humor, but he can be scary and confrontational...

Balthazar will steal a boy's soul, which is wrong, but he seems to still have a sense of fair play...
He does, yeah. He is genuinely happy to see Castiel. Castiel means something to him. I made it as true as I could possibly do it: "It was really wonderful to see you. Even if you've still got a stick up your ass." But Balthazar was genuinely pleased to see Castiel, and it's very funny. He saves Castiel from Raphael!

Was it the first time you'd auditioned for the show?
I'd auditioned for Crowley and I'd auditioned for Lucifer [before being cast as Balthazar]. I was like, "Am I *ever* gonna get on *Supernatural*?"

It's as if they were saving Balthazar for you!
I loved Balthazar from the start! "This is my role! This is what I do best – being naughty!" And I was wicked and fun at the same time.

You said you liked working with Misha – did you enjoy working with Jensen and Jared too?
They're really nice guys. Robert Singer makes it fun, too. He was a goldmine of information! You never know what to expect when you come in as a guest character; you never know if people are going to be, "Who's this guy coming in?" I just had fun, I came in good-humored and it felt good. Right away, as soon as I got to the production office, everyone

“SOMETIMES YOU WORK ON A CHARACTER THAT YOU HAVE TROUBLE GETTING INTO, BUT BALTHAZAR WAS INSTANT. THERE WAS A LOT OF ME IN HIM.”

made me feel really welcome, and that's really important. The costume designer was spot-on, as soon as I met her, I knew! And everyone from make-up... they just wanted to make me look good, sexy, and rock 'n' roll. So you feel good instantly in your skin, and it helps your performance! The crew is super-pro. Top notch. You know right away when a makeup person or costume person is good when they *get* you.

It must be strange walking onto a new show, dressing up and acting as a part of that universe...
It's not, actually – the dressing up and being someone else is not strange. The coming into a new universe... I've been on the other side [of it too]. On a show I did called *Odyssey 5* we welcomed guest stars onto episodes. I actually tried to make it as easy as possible for the guest stars. I've been on certain shows where the stars were not particularly nice. If you're young and impressionable, it can be hard! I always come in really prepared and razor sharp.

You've been acting for a long time, haven't you?
Twenty-five years. I did a lot of theatre. I studied in France and my dream was to come to London. I was given a chance at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, but I couldn't afford it. But then I was accepted at the Conservatoire National Superieur d'Art Dramatique in France, and it was free. So I went, as I'm bilingual. I started working in France, but it didn't agree with me. I was planning to work in London, but I went to New York and got a job and my green card. The first job I did was a play with Al Pacino and that was it!

How did you move into TV?
I did a lot of stage work in New York, and then I discovered that TV pays really well, and film [*laughs*]. Then I moved to LA three years ago. As soon as I bought a house in LA and settled down, I've never looked back! It's a two-and-a-half hour flight to Vancouver, and *Fringe* and *Supernatural* both shoot there. I've shot more in Canada than anywhere else – more than in LA and New York combined! I've shot in Toronto, Nova Scotia, Vancouver... all over Canada.

Do you like doing sci-fi and fantasy, like *Supernatural*?
I like anything where I get to have fun, to tell you the truth – fun as an actor! When I read Balthazar, even though it

“BALTHAZAR’S SORT OF THE ANTI-CASTIEL. HE’S A LITTLE NAUGHTY.”

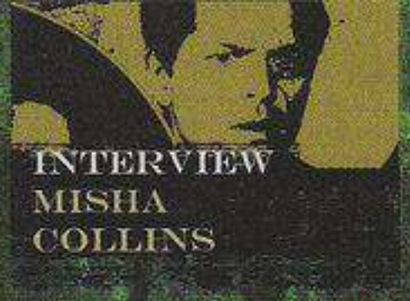
was two scenes, it was very well written. I instantly could feel the character creeping up into me. When that happens it’s great, it’s a wonderful feeling. Sometimes you work on a character that you have trouble getting into, but Balthazar was an instant connection. There was a lot of me [in him]. There’s this genuine sort of brotherly love with Castiel, which I like, I think that’s wonderful. And I can’t wait to see what they do with it. I can’t wait till they send me the script to see what happens! I told [the producers] that I speak French, Italian and Spanish – you can use that as an angel.

How would you sum up the experience of working on *The Third Man*?

It was a lot of a fun, and a really good character [to play]. That first scene was shot in one take. And the crew, they know each other so well – they’ve been together for six seasons.

So you’re looking forward to playing Balthazar again?

I’m looking forward to seeing what I can do to bring in more... because, you know, when you’ve just arrived and you do a scene, as soon as you start doing more episodes you start bringing in your [point of view]. I can totally see him as a very touchy-feely kind of guy. It’ll be fun. I see Balthazar having a life.



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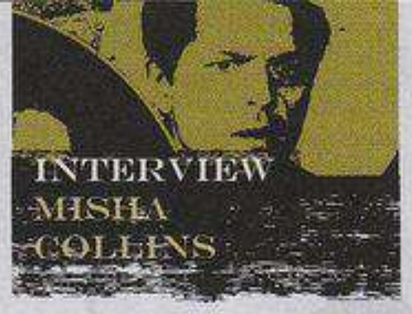
Stairway To Heaven

As season six continues, Castiel has his hands full dealing with a civil war in Heaven and helping Dean find out what happened to Sam's soul. For actor Misha Collins things have been no less hectic, as he's now juggling fatherhood with playing Sam and Dean's angelic ally. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with Misha to find out more...

Words: Nicholas Knight



Last time we spoke with Misha Collins, he'd just wrapped up season five and was unsure what a post-Apocalyptic season six had in store for his character, the rebellious angel Castiel. Now, he's battling the archangel Raphael's followers in Heaven and battling dirty diapers and sleepless nights at home...

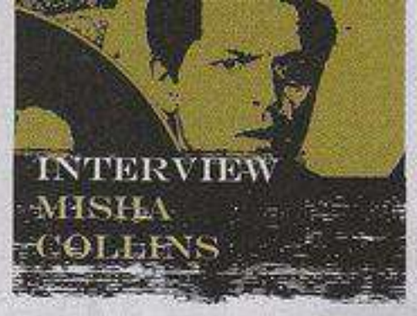
***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: At the last Vancouver *Supernatural* convention [covered elsewhere in this issue], you discovered you'd worn your jacket inside-out during the photo ops and then for part of your time onstage. Has Jared or Jensen or anyone else teased you about that?**

Misha Collins: To be perfectly honest with you, I think I give my coworkers *lots* of material to make fun of me with. But the next day that I shot after the con, I came to my trailer and every article of my wardrobe was hung inside out... and I didn't know why! I thought, "This is a terrible mistake that the wardrobe department has made – can't they see that everything is inside out?" And then I figured out why they'd done it! [*Laughs*]

Have there been any other pranks between you guys since then?

It's been a surprisingly peaceful and quiet time on the *Supernatural* set. It's like we have an armistice. And it's been kind of nice not fearing for my physical wellbeing at any given point. Although... I have concocted a *great* thing to do to Jared. But it's pointless to talk about it in advance. All I can say is that I'm excited about what I'm going to do, and I'm also fearful about what he's going to do in retaliation. I started a small prank war

“CASTIEL IS SIDETRACKED A LITTLE BIT FROM SAM AND DEAN’S STRUGGLE, BECAUSE HEAVEN ITSELF IS EMBROILED IN A CIVIL WAR.”



with Jared involving our cars, and it quickly got to the point where he said to someone, "You know what? I should just total his car. I can afford that." When you're dealing with an opponent who has that kind of mentality, it's a bit scary!

Speaking of scary costars, we heard you had an interesting encounter with Mark Pellegrino when you were working on *Moving Alan* together.

Mark and I shared a honey wagon – it's a trailer where five actors have tiny little bathroom stall-sized rooms – and we were next to one another. He was doing this vocal warm-up in his, and it really freaked me out. I was thinking, "What the hell is going on?" [While I was hearing] "*Hunh! Hunh!*" He was really getting into the vocal warm-up stuff, but because I'd never heard anything like that, I thought somebody was getting beaten up! Then I was like, "Wait a minute... No, no, that's somebody doing vocal warm-ups." But that was like ten years ago; he wasn't doing any of that to my knowledge when he was working on *Supernatural*.

You probably won't get to work with Pellegrino's Lucifer again on *Supernatural*, but there've been lots of other great characters and monsters so far this season. What do you think of season six so far?

It's been a little disconcerting [for the characters]. I think that we don't quite know what's going on [in Heaven or on Earth]. Things on the surface appear to perhaps have gone back to a more normal routine in the *Supernatural* universe, but everything's a little heightened. Monster activity is up, and the monsters seem to be a bit more fearless and bigger and badder than they ever were before. This show has gotten back a little bit to its season one roots, where it's Sam and Dean doing a lot of monster hunting and a little bit less of the bigger angel-demon mythology storylines going on. But as the season unfolds, we're going to see that the bigger

"THE MOST EMBARRASSING GUILTY PLEASURE THAT I WOULD CONFESS TO IS PLAYING SCRABBLE WITH JARED."

mythology actually does tie in with this heightened monster activity. Things are not as they seem in the *Supernatural* universe...

What else should I tell you about season six so far? Castiel is sidetracked a little bit from Sam and Dean's struggle, because Heaven itself is embroiled in a civil war, which has pitted Raphael's camp against Castiel's camp, and he's doing everything he can to hold things together up there. So Sam and Dean's trivial little problems of not having souls and being turned into vampires and that kind of thing pale in comparison to Castiel's troubles.

Are disappointed that Castiel hasn't been more prominent in season six so far?

Well, Cass' role is going to figure prominently in the mythology of the season overall. He's lighter in the first half of the season than he's going to be in the second half. But to be perfectly honest with you, no, I'm not disappointed because I just had a son and it's really nice to be able to be with him rather than being with Sam and Dean for this small period of time. So I'm actually savoring the time off.

Has your son been with you in Vancouver?

Yeah. In fact, he is a Canadian. He was born in our apartment here in Vancouver, so he's a dual citizen. His name is West Anaximander Collins.

What's been your favorite Castiel scene so far in season six?

I definitely have a favorite episode – *The Third Man* was a lot of fun to do. I didn't actually perform the stunt, but I loved watching the stunt of my stuntman jumping out the fourth floor window. He acted totally unfazed by it.

Do you do most of your other stunts? Like, the knife fighting?

I do all of my own disappearing. And I do my own exploding. I have done the knife fight stuff so far, and I've done more training stuff on *Supernatural* than I've done on anything else in terms of martial arts stuff. When I've had substantial knife fight scenes, I've done a fair amount of preparation to make it look as natural as possible. In my normal life as Misha, I rarely stab anyone, so that's taken a little bit of work getting into.

Was it a stunt double that rolled down the stairs in *The Third Man*?

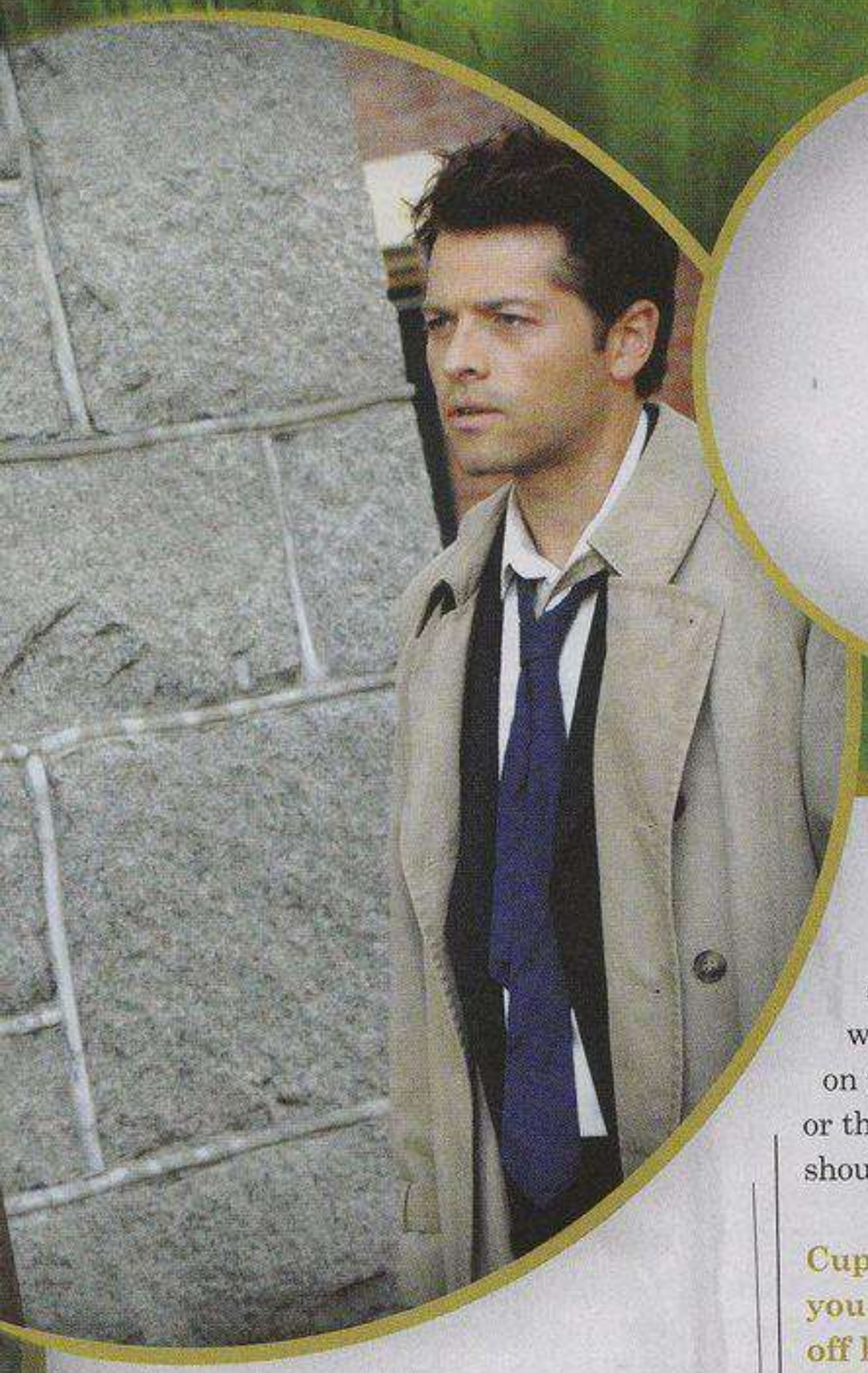
I didn't do all of the stair rolling, but I did one full somersault on the stairs.

Did Jensen and Jared offer to help push you down the stairs?
Yes, they did. I guess you can just infer that from our dynamic. Yeah, they were very helpful in that respect!

In *You Can't Handle the Truth*, Veritas makes people tell the truth. If you were forced to tell the truth about what it's really like to work with Jared and Jensen, what would you say?
I would say it's like adult circumcision. Every day. With no anesthesia. [*Laughs*]

And if you were forced to tell the truth about what your most embarrassing guilty pleasure is, what would it be?
Why would I tell you that? I mean, truly, I'm not going to tell you that! It's a great question, so I guess I could rephrase it for you. The most embarrassing guilty pleasure that I would confess to is playing Scrabble with Jared. This is humiliating, and this is taking me down several pegs, but he usually beats me.

He knows more big words?
No, he doesn't know the words – that's what drives me up the wall! He knows that certain combinations of letters are a word, but he doesn't know the definition of the word. It's really frustrating. For example, yesterday, he used the word *fanion*, and it is a word. It's a small flag that a surveyor uses. He didn't know that. He didn't know



what it meant, but he used it on the Scrabble board.

What's been happening behind-the-scenes at the moment?

I don't have anything for you [there]. You know what I'm suffering from right now? Baby brain. I did an interview a few days ago and I noted, "Jeez, I used to feel like I was fluid and somewhat funny in these things and now I'm just exhausted." I think that getting one-and-a-half hours of sleep at a stretch does a number on your interview skills.

Perfectly understandable! Here's a relatively easy question: What's your favorite scene that you've ever done on *Supernatural*?

I don't know why, but what pops into my head is telling Jared – or Sam, as you like to call him – not to ask stupid questions, right after I drunk that liquor store [in *99 Reasons*]. That was a fun scene to do. The whorehouse scene [in *Free To Be You and Me*] was fun, too. There's been a lot. It's hard to say, because probably the most fun I've had on set has been some of the antics behind-the-scenes, like with the naked Cupid. That was a very difficult scene to shoot. There was a lot of laughing behind-the-scenes on that one¡ It was a very long shoot or that scene; much longer than it should've been.

Cupid didn't wear any clothes. Do you ever wish Castiel would take off his clothes? Now that you're one of the head honchos in Heaven, don't you think your vessel deserves a new outfit?

Yeah, it would be nice. Like, even if they were to put Cass in a nice sundress. You know, something more flattering to his figure. That would be nice. It would be nice to get him in something a little sexier... But, I don't know, I've actually totally given up hope. In the beginning I thought for sure they'd have the cool John Hughes makeover scene where Cass is suddenly hip and with it. But now I don't think that's ever gonna happen.

Now that Castiel is spending so much time in Heaven, do you think he'll ever cross paths with psychic Pamela, who's taken up residence there? If so, what will he say to her? "Hey, sorry about burning your eyes out – my bad."

Yeah, yeah, I think a simple apology will do. But, hey, she has her sight in Heaven, though! So really, the Lord taketh away and the Lord giveth back is the message there.

From burning people's eyes out to reading cherubs' minds, it seems like we're always discovering new Castiel powers. What do you think of Castiel's ability to shove his hand inside people to read their souls?

Pretty gross, huh? It had quite an effect on that little kid [in *The Third Man*] when I shoved my hand into his chest. It was a little weird. It just looked really creepy in person. I would've thought if a soul was in a person, that you could tell by the glint in their eye or something. Evidently not. You have to put your fist into their chest and run your fingers over their pulsing heart!

Castiel swooped in like a superhero in *Caged Heat*...

Yeah, I don't want to pat myself on the back too much, but *Cass killed Crowley*. So a big chapter is over. Or appears to be over...

How has working on season six been so far?

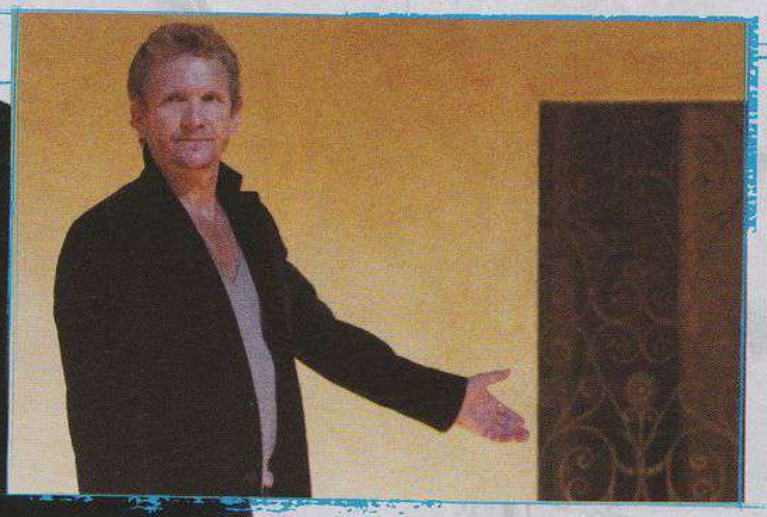
The season has been going great. I have not been there nearly as much as Jared and Jensen. Jensen has been there pretty much every day [as he's been directing as well as acting].

One thing that I can say about working on *Supernatural* that's from the heart is that I love the cast and crew. We have such a great time working together. It's just a great place to go to work. And that's not something I can say about most of the sets I've been on. I've enjoyed artistically doing some of the projects I've done in the past, and some have been good places to work, but *Supernatural* is a *great* place. I feel lucky to be a part of the show. And I'm going to leave you with that corny little nugget...

GOING ROGUE

Balthazar has been one of the most popular additions to *Supernatural* since his debut in *The Third Man*. His hedonism and offhand way with people have made for a huge contrast with Castiel, and SEBASTIAN ROCHÉ's charming performance as the roguish angel has been central to his appeal. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* talked to Roché soon after filming *My Heart Will Go On* to get his take on the character...

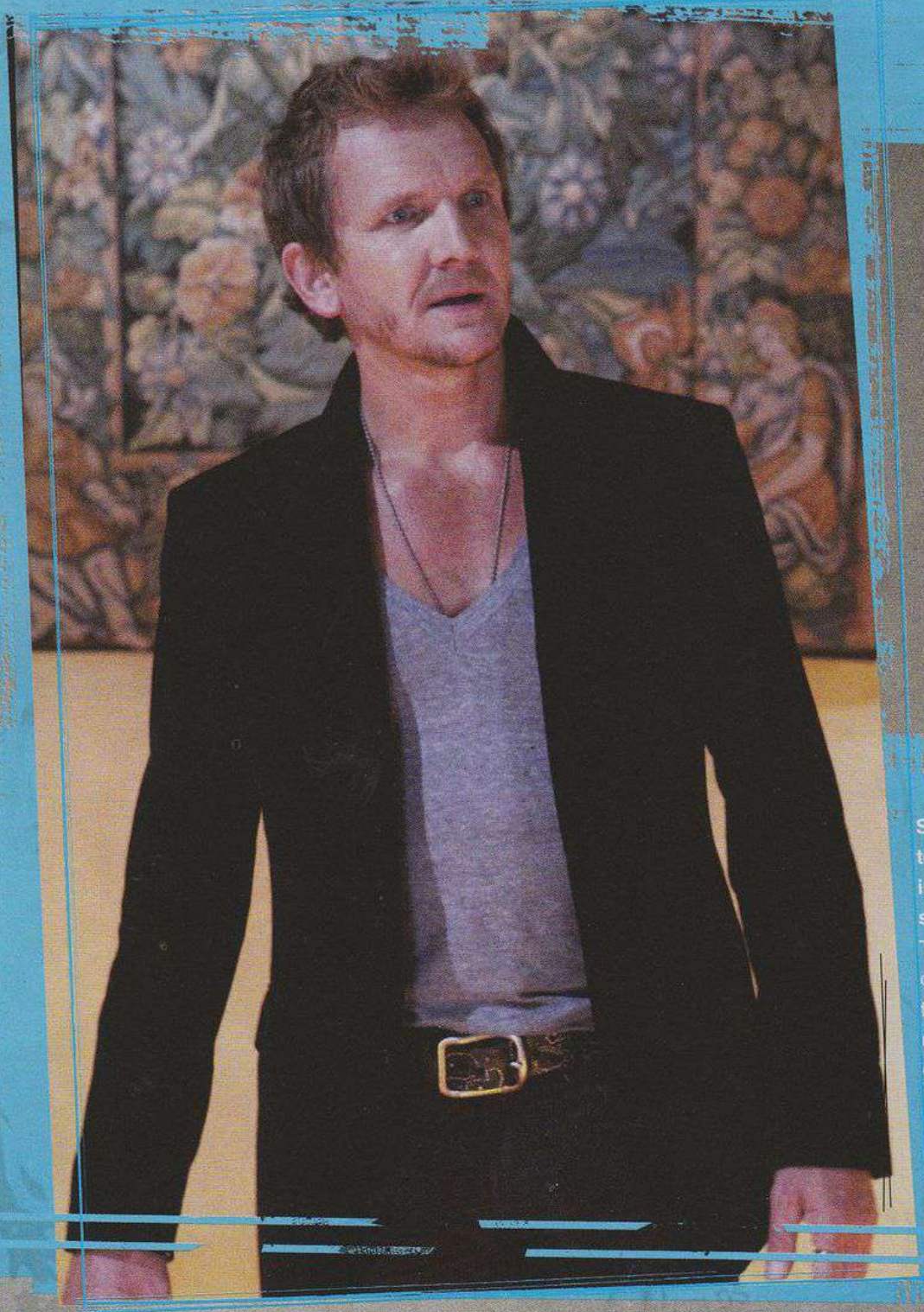
Words: Nicholas Knight



The Official Supernatural Magazine first spoke with Sebastian Roché after Balthazar's memorable introduction in *The Third Man*, but since then he's appeared in five more episodes and his character has proven to be one of the most unique angels to have graced the TV screen. The actor shares his thoughts on angel possession, time travel, and *Supernatural*'s brilliant writing...

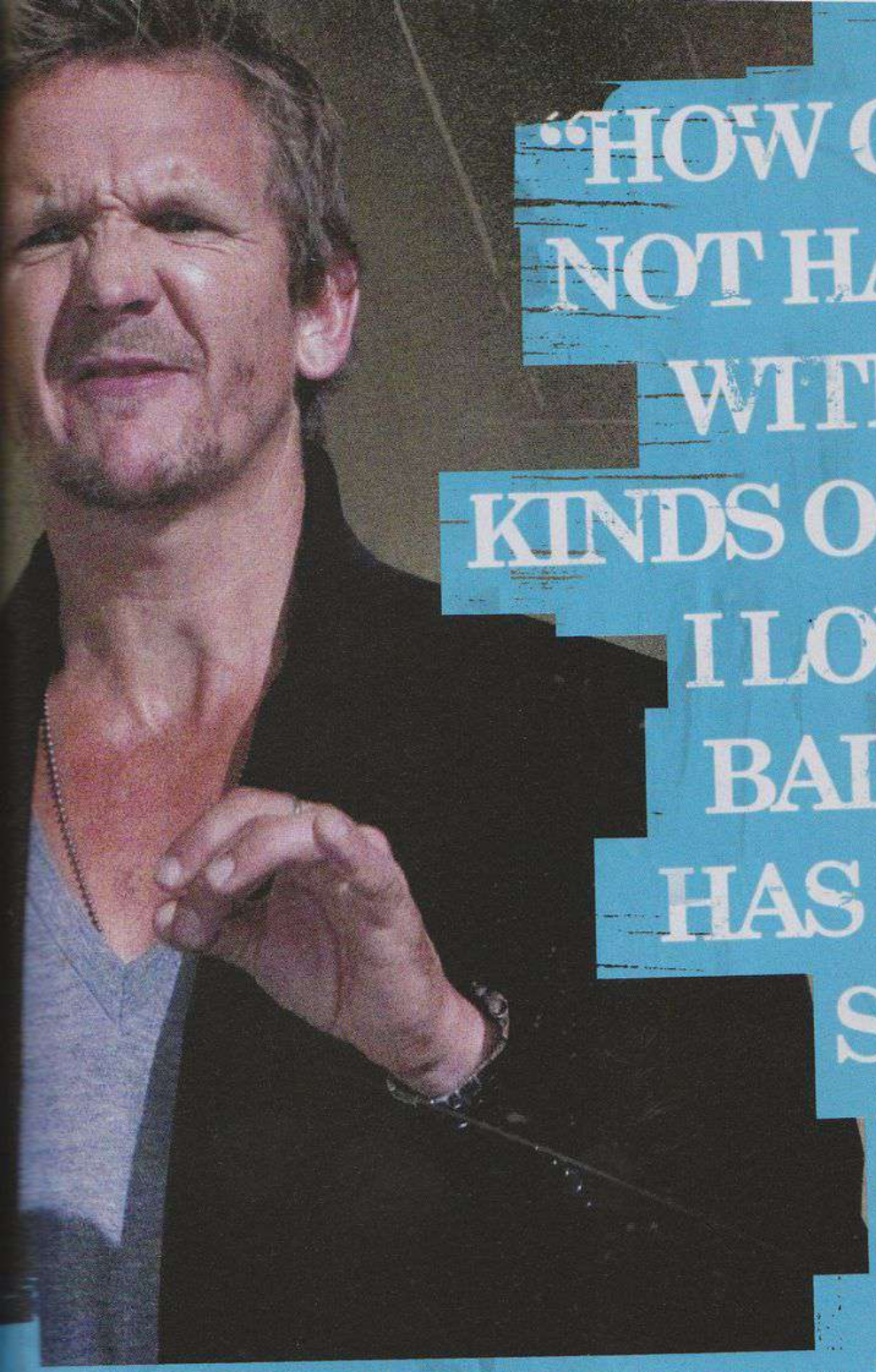
The Official Supernatural Magazine: A lot has happened with your character since your first episode. Back then you said that you didn't think Balthazar was a bad guy, despite the fact that he'd been buying human souls with stolen heavenly weapons. Since then he's taken some very questionable actions... so do you still think that Balthazar is a good guy?

Sebastian Roché: I don't think Balthazar's a bad guy. I truly think he's a good guy. He has the capacity to change things, but I don't think he does things that are permanent. And he cannot always change them. Also, he does help the boys, even though it pisses him off because he's doing something else [at the time], like he's probably having a drink from a hundred year-old bottle of Segur Bordeaux or whatever. He lives his life on his own terms.



Speaking of living your life on your own terms, we heard that before you got into acting, you lived on a sailboat for several years! What was that like?

That was truly amazing. From the age of 12 to 18, I lived on a sailboat with my family. We used to live in France – my mom is Scottish, my father's French – and one day my father basically announced that we were leaving. That was one of the most extraordinary experiences of my life: living on the sailing boat. We left from France and pretty much travelled the whole Mediterranean, the west coast of Africa,



"HOW CAN YOU NOT HAVE FUN WITH THESE KINDS OF LINES? I LOVE THAT BALTHAZAR HAS A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOR."

South America, and the Caribbean. We didn't sail the Pacific. It was truly a life-affirming experience that set the bar for the rest of my life. And it really set the bar very high. It influenced what kind of person I was going to be. It's extremely important in my life to travel, see other cultures. I'm a free-spirited traveller.

Since you enjoy travelling so much, if the opportunity presented itself, would you travel back in time like Balthazar? And if so, would you change anything, like stopping the Titanic from sinking?

I'd like to time travel! But what would I do? Oh, there are so many things. I would like to go back in time and meet my heroes: Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Laurence Olivier when he was playing Hamlet at The Old Vic... Those are the kinds of things I'd try to do, actually. But I don't know if I'd like to change anything.

That's probably for the best, since, as theorized in *My Heart Will Go On*, changing one event could cause people you love to die, or never to be born!

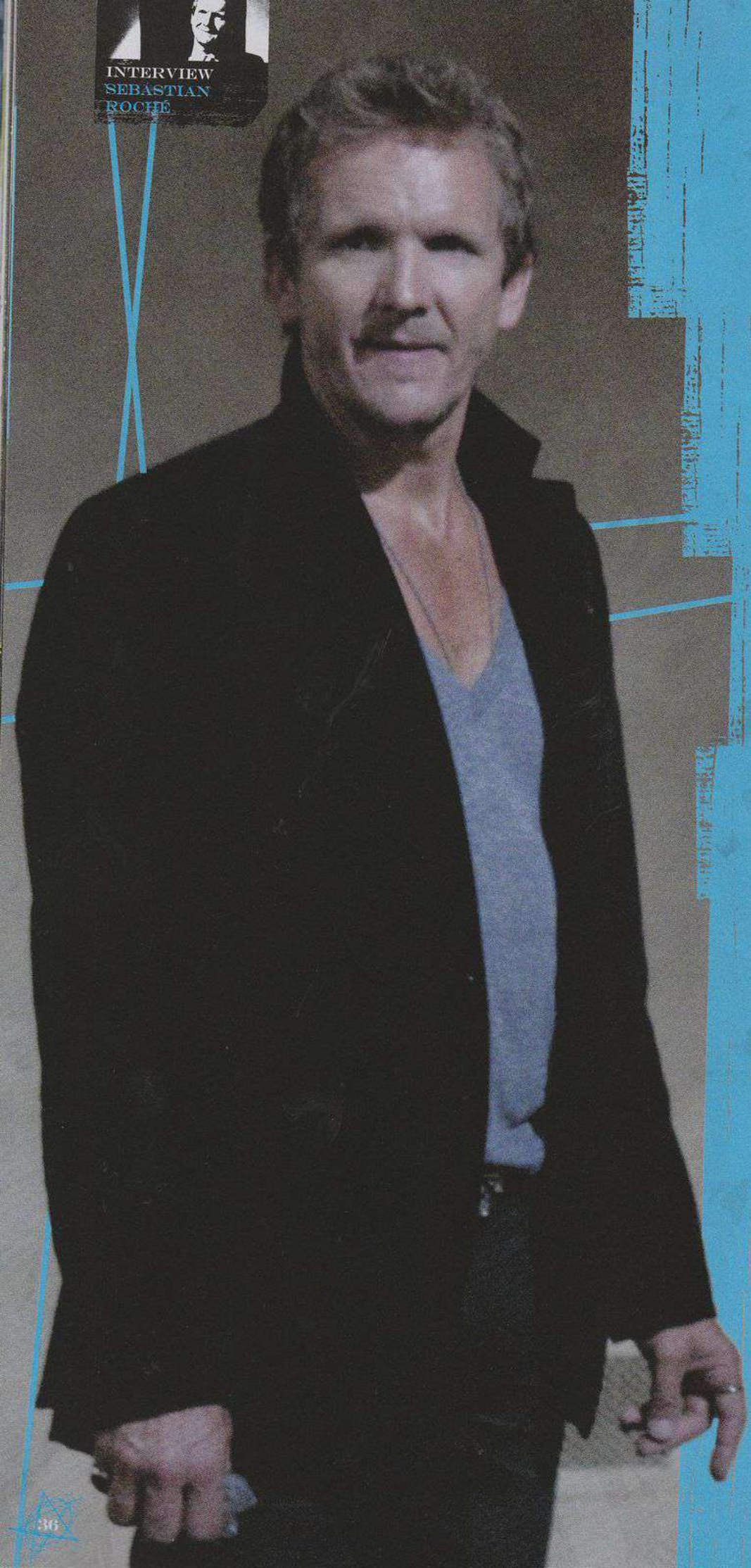
Yeah, so I'm not even going to go there...

Balthazar had no problem going there, however. What did you think of his exploits in *My Heart Will Go On*?

The script for *My Heart Will Go On* was hilarious! I was giggling when I read it. The dialogue was really funny. When the guys ask me, "Why did you save the ship?" And I say, "Because I hated the movie!" That was brilliant. I really had a blast doing it. It's just brilliant to see how witty the writers are. I feel like they really get my sense of humor.

Balthazar has definitely had some great dialogue. Do you have a favorite line?

There are so many! Of course, from



My Heart Will Go On, [I loved] when Sam says, "Who's Celine Dion?" And I say, "Oh she's a destitute lounge singer somewhere in Quebec, and let's keep it that way..." There's also a line where I appear behind Fate with a sword and I'm about to kill her, Castiel stops me, and she turns around and I go, "Awkward." And she's very stuck-up, so I say, "Before you go, darling, I can remove that stick from your ass." And she's like, "Don't try me." And I say, "Well, we'll leave it inserted then. Goodbye! Let's go sink the Titanic." The lines are brilliant. How can you not have fun with these kinds of lines? I love that Balthazar has a great sense of humour.

What's been your favourite scene?
Well, I loved doing that one in *My Heart Will Go On* with Fate. And I really loved doing the one in *The French Mistake* where I come in and I'm a little crazy, rushing around to get all the ingredients for the spell.

As you've indicated, Balthazar enjoyed his carefree life, so were you surprised when you read the script for The French Mistake and learned that Balthazar had given the heavenly weapons back and joined the war?
Well, yeah, but no one is finished in stone. Balthazar has a certain philosophy, but he also wants to help his brother angel. I think that once his back is against the

wall, he will do anything to save Castiel. His will would be to be carefree, but he has to make a choice eventually; he does have to take sides. And I think he's on the side of right, whatever that means.

If you encountered an angel in real life, maybe even one like Balthazar, and they wanted to use you as a vessel, would you say yes?
If they wanted to be in my body, I totally would love them to. If they wanted to possess me, why not? If they had amazing powers, like powers of persuasion and superhuman intellectual capacity, yes. It would be fun. I'm open for anything.

Anything? What about travelling to a parallel universe, like the one on *Fringe*?
On *Fringe* I died! But there is a parallel universe, so you never know if I might come back. Check out season three of *Fringe*. I'm only in two episodes – episodes two and four – but they're really good episodes.

"THE SCRIPT FOR *MY HEART WILL GO ON* WAS HILARIOUS! I WAS GIGGLING WHEN I READ IT."

"BALTHAZAR HAS A CERTAIN PHILOSOPHY, BUT HE ALSO WANTS TO HELP HIS BROTHER ANGEL."

While we're on the topic, do you have any other recent projects that you'd like *Supernatural* fans to check out?
I'm also going to be in a Syfy movie called *The Blood of Pegasus*, so they can check that out.

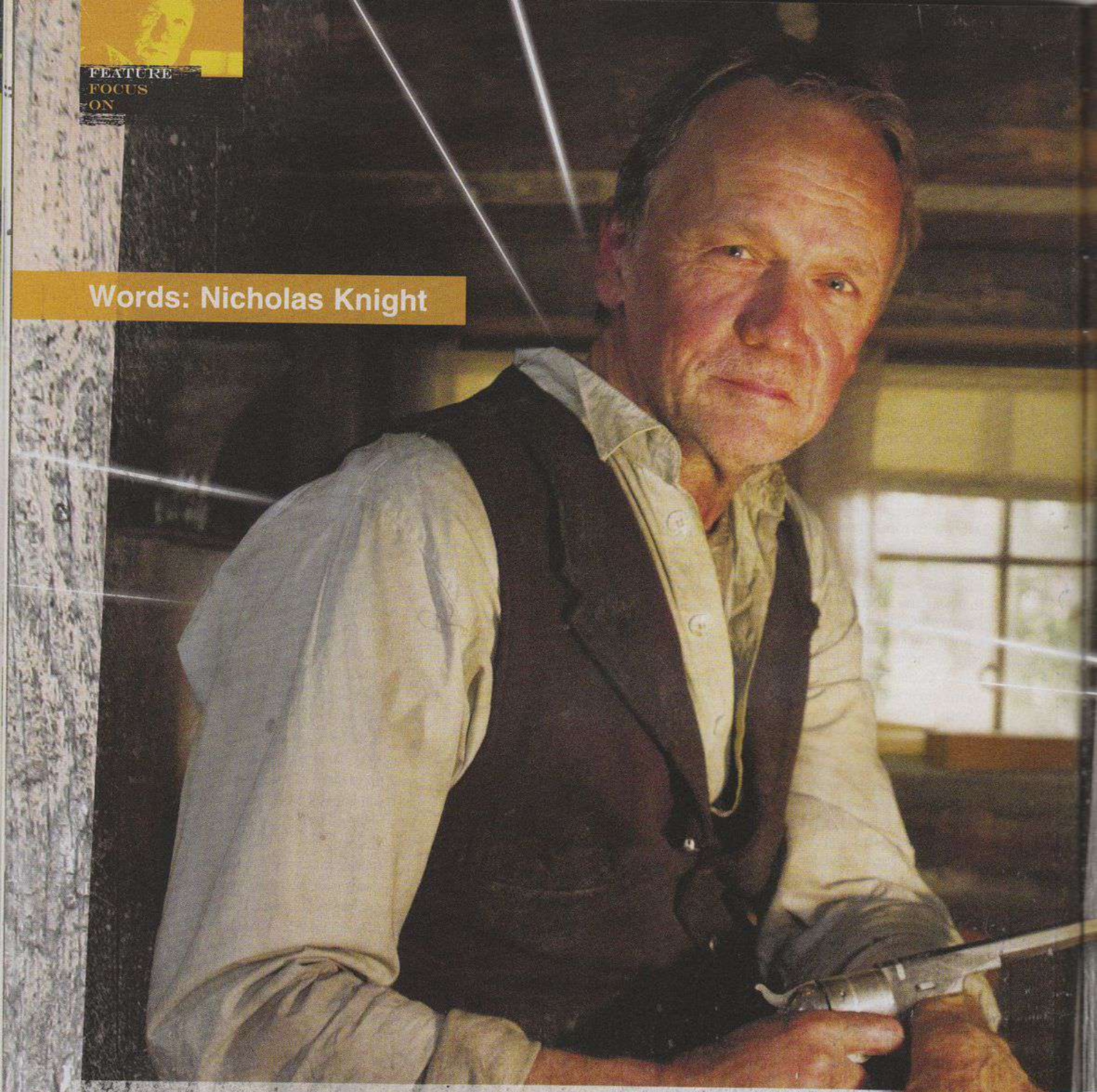
Of course, what we're all hoping for is to see you more on *Supernatural*; do you think that's likely?
I'm up for anything. Bring it on!

There you go again, saying you're up for "anything." Be careful what you wish for, because the *Supernatural* writers can definitely come up with just about anything...
I think they're very inventive. The stories are brilliant and have a lot of humor. I really love it. I have a whale of a time working on *Supernatural*.

Have there been any challenges to working on *Supernatural*?
Challenges? No, it's always an absolute pleasure being on that set. It's a lot of fun because Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles are very funny people. Misha Collins too. We throw zingers at one another and have good laughs. It's really a lot of fun I have to admit. Of course, for that scene in *The French Mistake* that I mentioned, it was crazy because I had to come in and use so many props. It wasn't a challenge, *per se*, but it was a crazy scene. It was fun to do, actually. Balthazar was a little hyper... But there's no real challenge. It's been fun all the way.

Obviously you've had a lot of fun on *Supernatural*, which comes as no surprise to us, but is there anything else about working on *Supernatural* that you'd like to share with the fans?
Apart from it being an absolute pleasure, I love the way my character turned out. It's actually one of my favorite characters I've ever played. I can bring a lot of myself into the character. I like that. I had a lot of fun doing it, and I hope to be doing more next season. Fingers crossed.

Words: Nicholas Knight



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FOCUS ON

SUPERNATURAL: THE TERN

Moving from town to town, shooting the bad guys and saving the day, it isn't much of a stretch to see Sam and Dean as modern-day gunslingers. Perhaps it was inevitable then that in season six's *Frontierland*, they'd become bona fide cowboys in the Old West! *The Official Supernatural Magazine* went behind the scenes of this time-traveling episode to find out more about Sam and Dean hitting the Wild West...

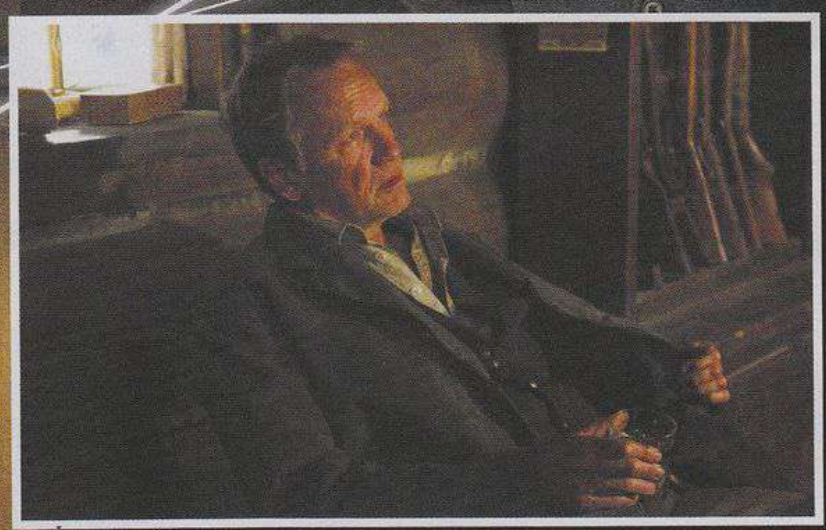
"The idea of sending Sam and Dean back into the Old West and having them meet up with Samuel Colt has been around for quite a while on *Supernatural*," executive story editor Andrew Dabb informs us. "Eric was talking about it as early as season two or three. So we knew we wanted to do a Western episode and the real question was, 'Can we pull it off?' For our show, that's a big undertaking to build all the sets and get everyone period clothes and get all the extras we'd need."

But then, somewhere around the middle of season six's writing schedule, "Kripke comes in and says he's finally cracked the Western idea," explains Dabb's writing partner, executive story editor Daniel Loflin. "And he was like, 'We're going to do a Western where they go back in time and get some sort of weapon that could kill the Mother of All Monsters.'"

"The Western episode is one of the ones that I think everyone on the staff would've wanted to write," says Dabb. "We just happened to be the lucky guys that drew it." The Phoenix in *Frontierland*, Elias Finch, is a tragic character. "I think Matthew Armstrong did a very nice job of bringing that through [in his performance]," comments Dabb. "It's not that he's melancholy necessarily, but he has this tragic story that he's poison to his mother. Imagine being that or being

"I'M A PRETTY IN-DEPTH RESEARCH ACTOR. I DO A LOT OF HOMEWORK."

– SAM HENNINGS



something that brought your mother pain; that's just a heartbreaking thing. That's what was going on in our minds when we were creating that character."

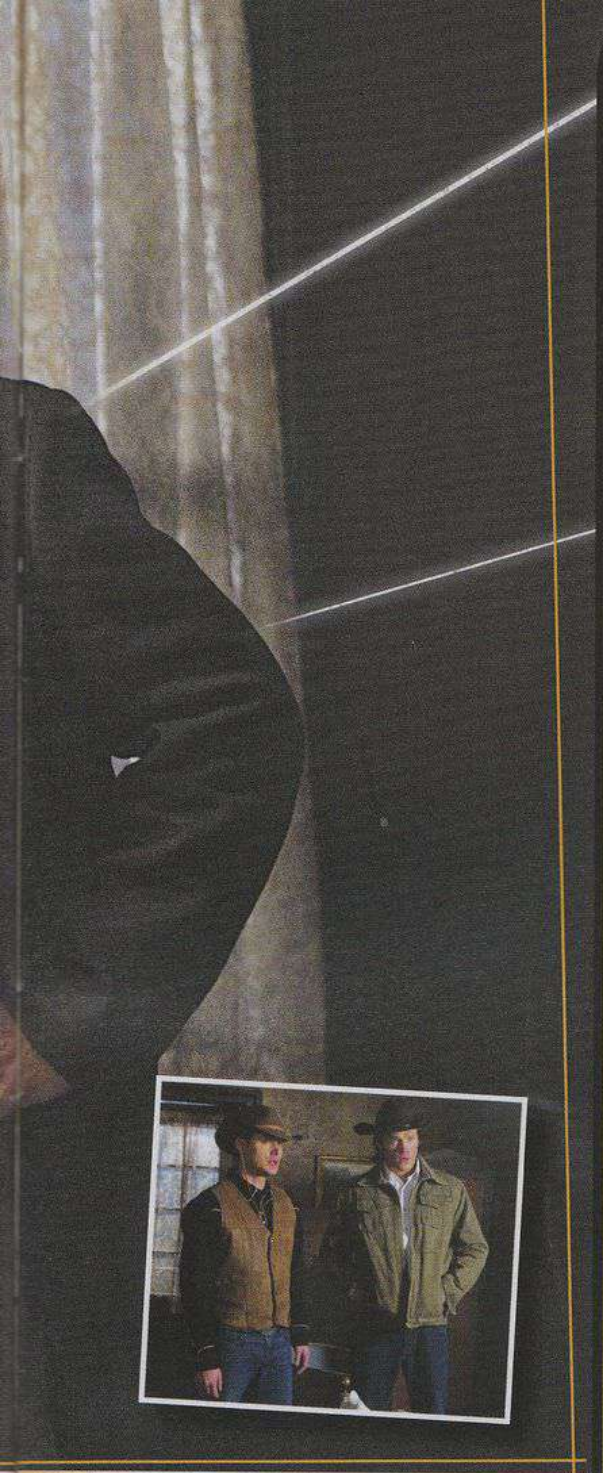
"I don't consider Elias the bad guy as much as I do a tragic figure," echoes Matthew Armstrong himself. "I'm not a proponent of capital punishment or vigilantism, so in that regard I would never condone what he does, but at the same time when something like [his wife's rape and murder] happens, it's certainly understandable from a human element. When someone has something that they love taken away from them, it's not out of the ordinary for somebody to act out. Even if you don't condone it, you can feel empathy for him."

In fact, if the Winchester boys didn't need the Phoenix's ashes so desperately to stop the Mother of All Monsters from turning humans into cattle, many viewers might've wished they would leave the wronged creature alone. "I actually had that thought from my character's point of view," Armstrong says. "It's like, 'Aw, man, why do you want to kill me? I'm doing something that you'd do!' But I think at the end of the day my character's quite happy to be put out of his misery."

Of course, killing the Phoenix wasn't exactly easy. The sheriff tried hanging him and he just came back to life. But even though he was playing the part of an immortal monster and there were numerous safety precautions in place, Armstrong says, "That was uncomfortable. Not physically uncomfortable – the stunt people took very good care of me – but it was definitely an odd sensation and not one that I would want to take any further than what I did that day. It's pretty wild when the ground beneath you disappears and you fall, especially with something tied around your neck."

"The noose that he had around his neck was only artificially attached to the cable and it just slid up and down with it," points out stunt coordinator Lou Bollo. "He knew we were only going to drop him a foot or two, but he's sitting there, he's got

Sacrificial Angel



his hands tied behind his back, he's got this noose around his neck, and he says to me, 'I'm scared. I'm really scared. I don't have to act here. This is one of the most challenging things I've ever done in acting. I really have to trust you guys...' Unless you've done it before, it's a frightening thing."

"The hanging had a realistic look to it," adds special effects supervisor Randy Shymkiw. "There were a lot of people that were taken with the reality of what we were doing."

Something that Armstrong could bring a lot of realism to (without the frightening aspects) was playing the role of a cowboy, something he'd been doing since he was

Frontierland wasn't all about the Wild, Wild West. After all, the boys needed Castiel to send them there... and bring them back, which he almost wasn't able to do since the angel Rachel nearly succeeded in assassinating him. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* spoke with Sonya Salomaa, who played Rachel. Rachel was close friends with Castiel, but when she discovered his dirty little secret, she turned on him... which led to her own demise.

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: How did you prepare for playing an angel?**
Sonya Salomaa: My father's a minister, so I think my whole life's been preparation for this role. [*Laughs*] Because I have some religious background, I have some insight into angels, and I've never really thought angels were the fluffy, harp-playing, curly-haired [beings] that we like to think of them as. I look at them more as strong warriors. They have to watch over us! I just thought about that when I played her and it seemed to work.

Have you ever been in a knife fight before? (On stage or screen, of course!) And did you get any stunt training for that scene where you're battling Misha Collins?
No, I've been stabbed before, but not with a knife. We got together with the stunt coordinator a couple days before filming and choreographed the fight. It was actually really fun, and it was nice to have that time beforehand so we weren't just thrown in, because often times in TV it goes so fast – you just get thrown into it and they're like, "Here you go, work something out." We didn't have to do that. We felt kind of stupid at first, because every time you do something new you're kind of clunky, but I think we got it in the end. It was kind of like a dance, actually, and I think we did a really good job.

Have you ever been killed on film before this?
Many times! I've been suffocated, I've been shot, I've been killed with a nail gun, I've been stabbed with a vampire-killing stake... I've been killed a lot! When you're just starting out as a young woman in your twenties, you tend to get those roles where you get killed off really quickly. But this is the first time I've been killed in years!

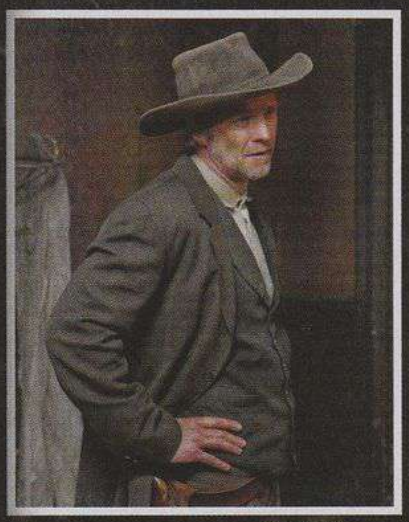
What's your favorite part of your *Frontierland* scenes?
In that last scene where I died, when I'm looking at Castiel and I'm like, "I know you better than anyone..." I remember the feeling it entailed when I was doing it, so wanting him to tell me the truth and the remorse when he didn't. It wasn't so much about the words, just that feeling of sadness between me and him; I thought it was really beautiful. It struck a chord within me when I said it, and I remember I almost started tearing up because I was feeling such sadness about what was to come.

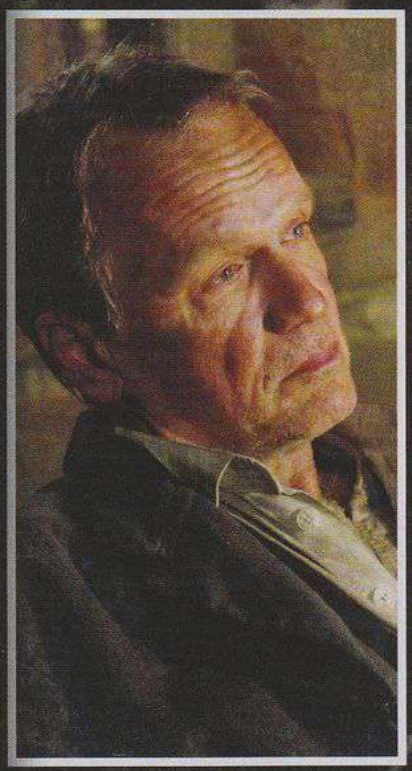
"WE KNEW WE WANTED TO DO A WESTERN EPISODE AND THE REAL QUESTION WAS, 'CAN WE PULL IT OFF?'" – ANDREW DABB

a kid. "I did that endlessly," he reminisces. "I remember for Christmas one year getting this kit and it had everything. I had a rifle, a vest, boots, hat... the whole thing. I loved doing that. So doing it as a grown man was just recalling everything I did when I was six. Getting to do that was fun. One of the reasons I got into this business in the first place was to play dress-up and do really cool things like that.

"The showdown at high noon was my favorite thing to do," Armstrong continues. "It's the first western I did, so firing a real six-shooter took some practice. They're really heavy guns, and you've got to draw and cock and aim and shoot sort of simultaneously. The whole time I was on the set, it was practice drawing, practice drawing, practice drawing." Bollo confirms: "He worked on it relentlessly."

Sam Hennings (Samuel Colt) has been in many Westerns, but shooting *Supernatural*'s Colt was a unique experience for him. "I've done so many gunfights, but the Colt's barrel is longer than your regular six-shooter," he says. "It shoots slowly as you pull the trigger, but you can fan it and it shoots pretty quickly. Now, the problem with that is you fan with your left hand and the leading part of your hand has to hit [the hammer], and it rips your skin pretty good. I was going, 'Oh my God! What's going on here? Something's taking chunks of skin out of my left hand!' I had to get that glued up, get some kind of coloring on it so the blood wouldn't show, and keep going because I had to do this four-five times from all the



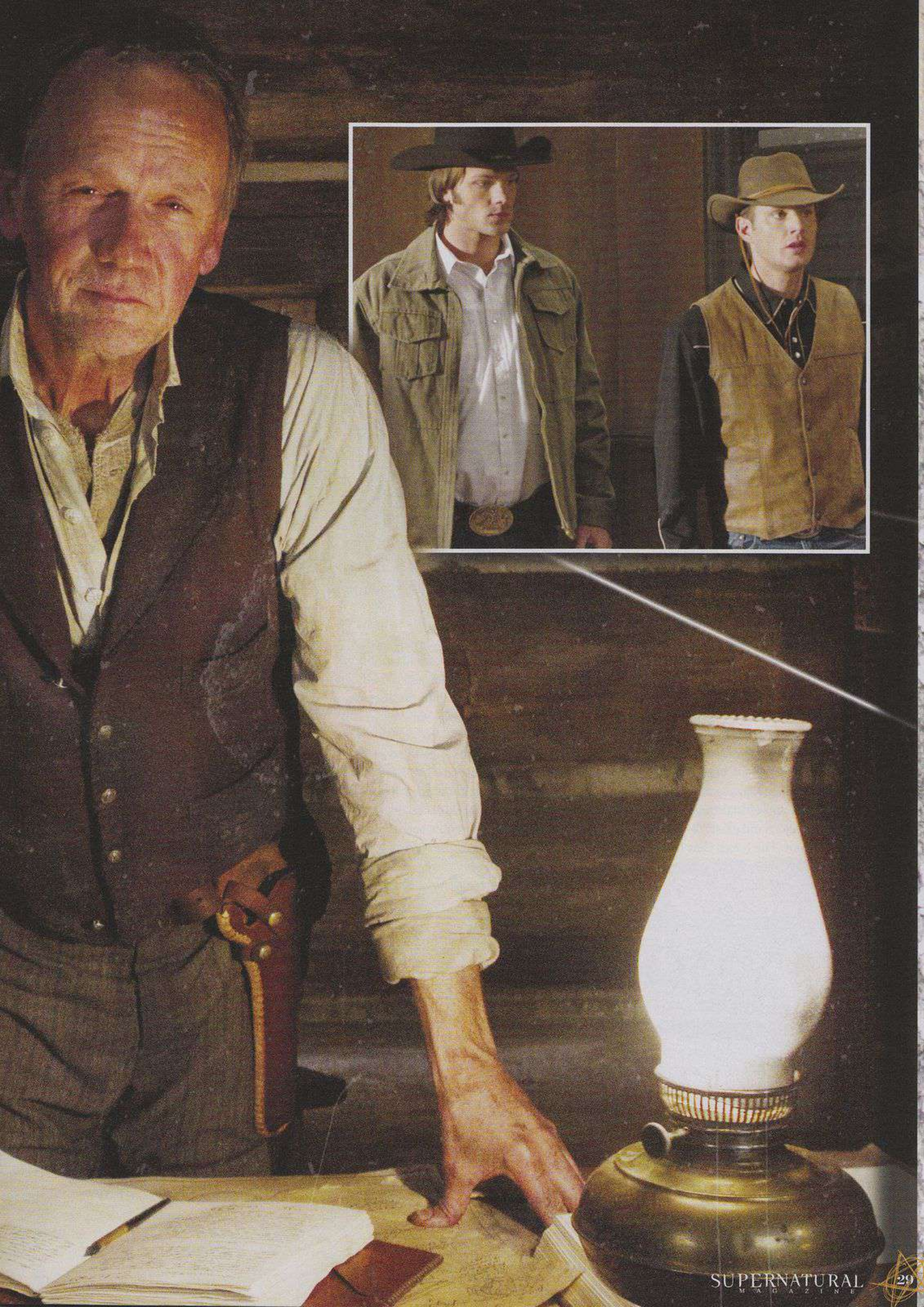


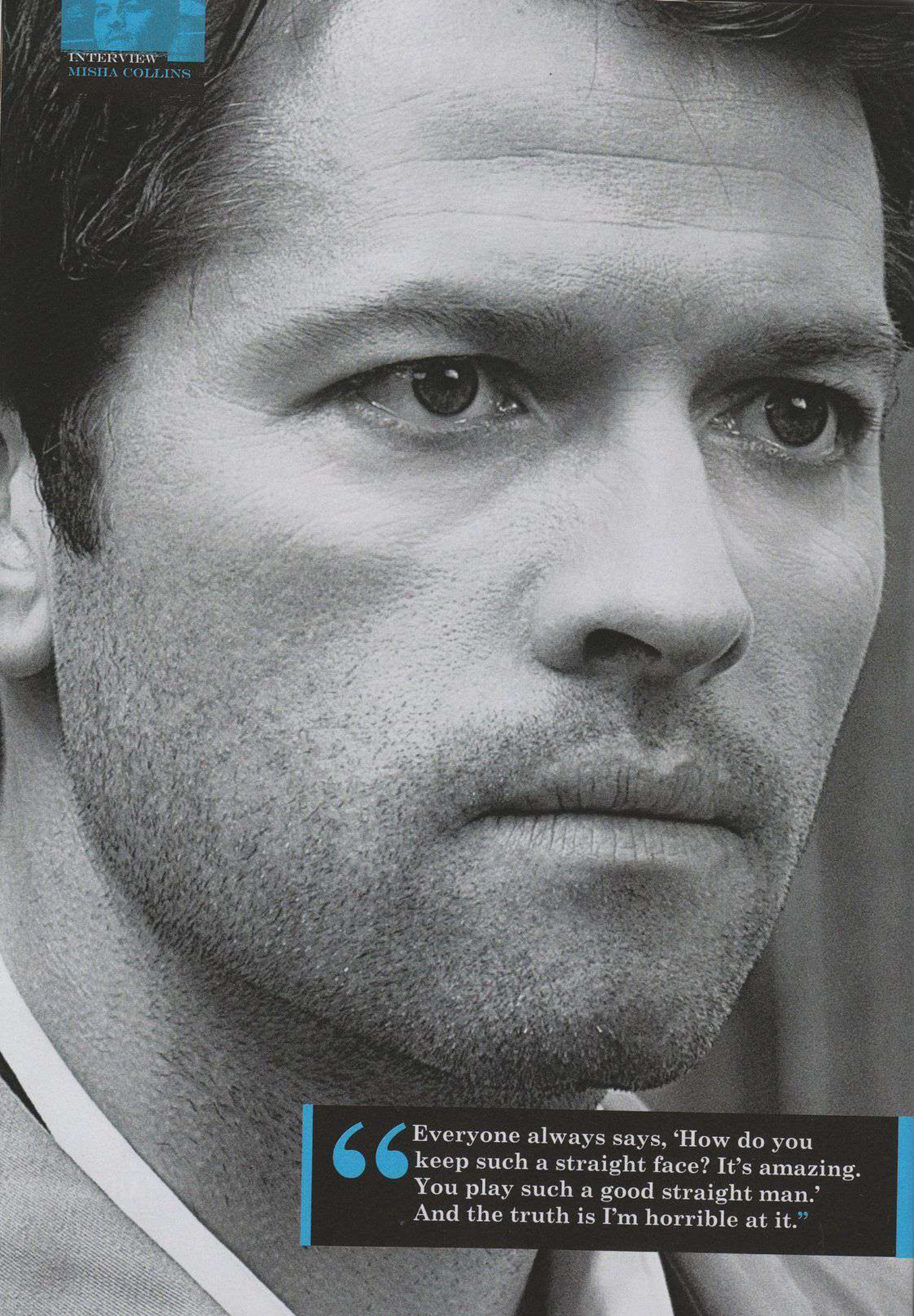
different angles. But when it's all said and done, it was great fun and worth whatever bits of blood I had to give."

Normally, Hennings says, "I'm a pretty in-depth research actor. I do a lot of homework." And he did research the historical Samuel Colt, but ultimately he says, "I decided to let it all go because if I stick to Sam Colt in 1860 being this and this and this, then how do I [reconcile] him being the guard of Hell's Gate and the creator of this gun that kills demons? You can't have them contradict each other, so I just did the part as much justice as I could, as an 1860's guy guarding Hell's Gate."

"Samuel Colt really didn't make the Colt to kill the Devil, and he didn't make the Devil's Gate in real life," confirms lead hairstylist Jeannie Chow. "I researched some photos of Samuel Colt and he had really long hair parted in the middle, but even though [the character is] based on a real person, it's still fictional, so we just had a loose look for him." In fact, most of the characters' hairstyles were pretty loose, since people tended not to comb – or *wash* – their hair very often back then. "It's a lovely sight," Chow says. "It was a mining town, so you have to think that these men haven't showered or taken a bath. So we just had a lot of greasy hair, a lot of plaque buildup on their teeth, dirty faces, dirty nails, and sweat-stained clothes that they'd been living in for who knows how long. But that was really fun."

From cast to crew to producers, everyone we spoke to agreed that working on a western episode was really fun. "It *is* fun!" exclaims Armstrong. "I think that everybody would love doing a Western."





> “Everyone always says, ‘How do you keep such a straight face? It’s amazing. You play such a good straight man.’ And the truth is I’m horrible at it.”

Words by: Nicholas Knight

PARADISE LOST

Castiel has had quite a journey on *Supernatural*, from the awkward angel who saved Dean from perdition to the power-crazed being who set himself up as the new God. *The Official Supernatural Magazine* caught up with actor Misha Collins to talk about Castiel's evolution...

Good guy? Bad guy? Ally? Enemy? How do we classify Castiel now? He did stop Raphael from rekindling Armageddon, so if the ends justify the means, then he's still a good guy, right? So what if he holds enough power to kill the Winchesters with the snap of a finger? He wouldn't do that... Would he? We certainly hope not. But we can't say for sure. Neither can Misha Collins, but he did share his views on his character's dramatic story arc...

***The Official Supernatural Magazine*: Obviously the big thing since we last spoke with you is Castiel's dealings with Crowley and all that came of that, so were you surprised by Castiel's corruption?**

Misha Collins: Yes and no. I think that it was an easily justifiable corruption in the end; it was kind of treading one of those dubious lines in justifying the means. It seems like most of the characters on *Supernatural* have gone down a similar, if ultimately less consequential, road at some point in their arc. So I think that in and of itself wasn't quite so shocking. I think that how it ultimately ends up playing out is more surprising.

It was a great twist when Castiel became the new God, so to speak. Since he was no longer an angel, did you make any changes to how you carried yourself or to your voice?

A couple of subtle things. He [now] has a very thick East Indian accent, walks with a limp, carries himself hunched over, and has an afro, so there are some subtle character changes, but I think they work.

Hmm. Maybe that's in the director's cut or something. But for the version of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* that actually aired...?

Very stereotypical God stuff. I don't know how broad the changes read, but there's a difference.

Regardless of the voice used, the face is yours, and you make Castiel's lines memorable with the deadpan looks you give while delivering humorous lines.

Everyone always says, "How do you keep such a straight face? It's amazing. You play such a good straight man." And the truth is I'm horrible at it. I blow it so often. The ones that they end up airing are the few

Castiel prepares to ascend to godhood

Cont.

takes where I manage to not crack a smile. I can't tell you how many takes I ruin just by breaking out laughing over and over and over again. And it doesn't help that Jared is often somehow grabbing me right below frame and trying to get me to laugh. It's funny when he gets me, but he gets me all the time. So I'm not good at keeping a straight face. I actually use really simple tricks like biting my cheeks and things like that, so a lot of the time when you see me on camera keeping a very stern and solid glare, it's because I'm biting my cheek particularly firmly.

Of the season six takes that aired, do you have a favorite line of dialogue?

I suppose, "I'm your new God," will stick with me for a while, it's sort of a nice one-two punch.

Another nice one-two punch was having Ben Edlund both write and direct a Cass-centric episode, *The Man Who Would Be King*. What was it like working with Edlund?

One thing that's a lot of fun in having someone like Ben directing is that you have a director who knows the whole arc, the characters, the connections, and can really talk to you about what's going on with your character. A lot of the directors are more like guest stars. There are several directors that we have who really know the story well, but a lot aren't as well-versed, so it's nice to have that perspective.

When we spoke with you halfway through season six, you mentioned that *The Third Man* was your favorite season six episode so far. Regarding that episode, what's your perspective on why Castiel didn't hesitate to torture the boy, Aaron Birch? Would you say it was an easy decision for him to make?

I think that it was an easy decision to make because I think that he believes that the means justify the ends. The ends being to win the war in Heaven. Ultimately he's fighting not only because he wants to preserve the peace in Heaven but also because if the Apocalypse is brought back, humanity will be destroyed. He's not only fighting to preserve Heaven, but also to preserve humanity. So torturing or causing some pain to this kid didn't seem like such a big deal to him, which frankly I think is sound reasoning. Also, if you can take into consideration that this kid had just killed three men, he wasn't exactly a little angel himself. That was a fun episode to shoot.

As fun as that one was, now that you've finished the rest of the season, do you have a new season six favorite? Either from the standpoint of working on it, or from watching the final cut?

The French Mistake takes both of those trophies home. I liked working on it and I loved the final product. I watched it twice, which I don't do normally. It was very good. But I haven't managed to get my wife to watch it once. My wife falls asleep! We have an infant son and she falls asleep the minute we start watching anything because we're so tired. As someone who works in television. I feel like it is my professional responsibility to keep abreast of what's on television, but not only have I not kept abreast in the last year, I don't think I could name five shows that are on TV right now. I'm that far out of the loop.

In *The French Mistake*, what was it like playing a version of yourself?

It was ****ing great!

> **"The best part about playing this character is the teleporting, the mind-reading, the time-traveling, and the social awkwardness."**

Alterna-Misha loved to "tweet" whenever the mood struck. You have quite the following on Twitter, so would you say in that sense you're the same as the TV Misha?

The Misha Twitterer on *Supernatural* was more of the quintessential douchebag actor Twitterer than I like to think of myself as. I don't really go for the celebrity Twitterer who likes to impart his daily beverage choice at Starbucks to his followers. That to me is a revolting modern phenomenon and one I try to satirize as much as I can.

To what do you attribute your huge following on Twitter, then?

I think my character was immediately – to everyone's surprise – quite popular with the fanbase. I'd never had a fan club before being on *Supernatural* and now I have a hundred and something thousand followers on Twitter and things that I never would have imagined. And I think that there's a lot of different factors as to why that would have happened. I think one reason is that it's actually a cool character and he can do all this cool stuff. And probably a major other additional contributing factor is that he was introduced to the show by pulling one of the show's heroes, Dean, from Hell. When you save one of the leads of the show, it immediately ingratiates you to the fanbase. So that helped.

We can think of many reasons why you and your character are still on the show, but we want to hear more of what you think!

When Castiel was introduced to the show in the first episode of season four [*Lazarus Rising*], he was originally intended to be a more minor character, but Castiel introduced the entire mythology of angels and Heaven, and that, I think, evolved into being a much bigger storyline than the writers initially thought, so my character endures. And Castiel has had a very interesting arc over the course of the last three years. He started as this sort of warrior of God who was fighting the righteous fight and doing God's bidding. And then he became disillusioned, and he became over the course of seasons four and five more human, and then more angelic again, and then was ultimately reconstituted by God after being blown to smithereens. And in season six Castiel is faced with what amounts to civil war and anarchy in Heaven. He's trying to avert the world falling back into an Apocalypse and is basically leading one of two opposing armies in Heaven. That's taken him on his own journey. It's a lot to go through.

It sure is! From an acting standpoint, what's been the best part about playing the character Castiel?

Well, the best part about playing this character is the teleporting, the mind-reading, the time-traveling, and the social awkwardness. It's nice to play a character who discovers pornography for the first time. It's fun playing Castiel. It's an interesting exploration of discovering what it's like to be human and what it's like to time-travel and fly and all that other kind of cool superhero stuff. It's like being a version of a superhero, which is great.

Of course, you're arguably not a hero anymore...

There's a part of me that always just wants to play a heroic character who can do no wrong, but the problem is that it gets a little boring. And the truth is, Castiel taking this dark turn is something that is actually consistent

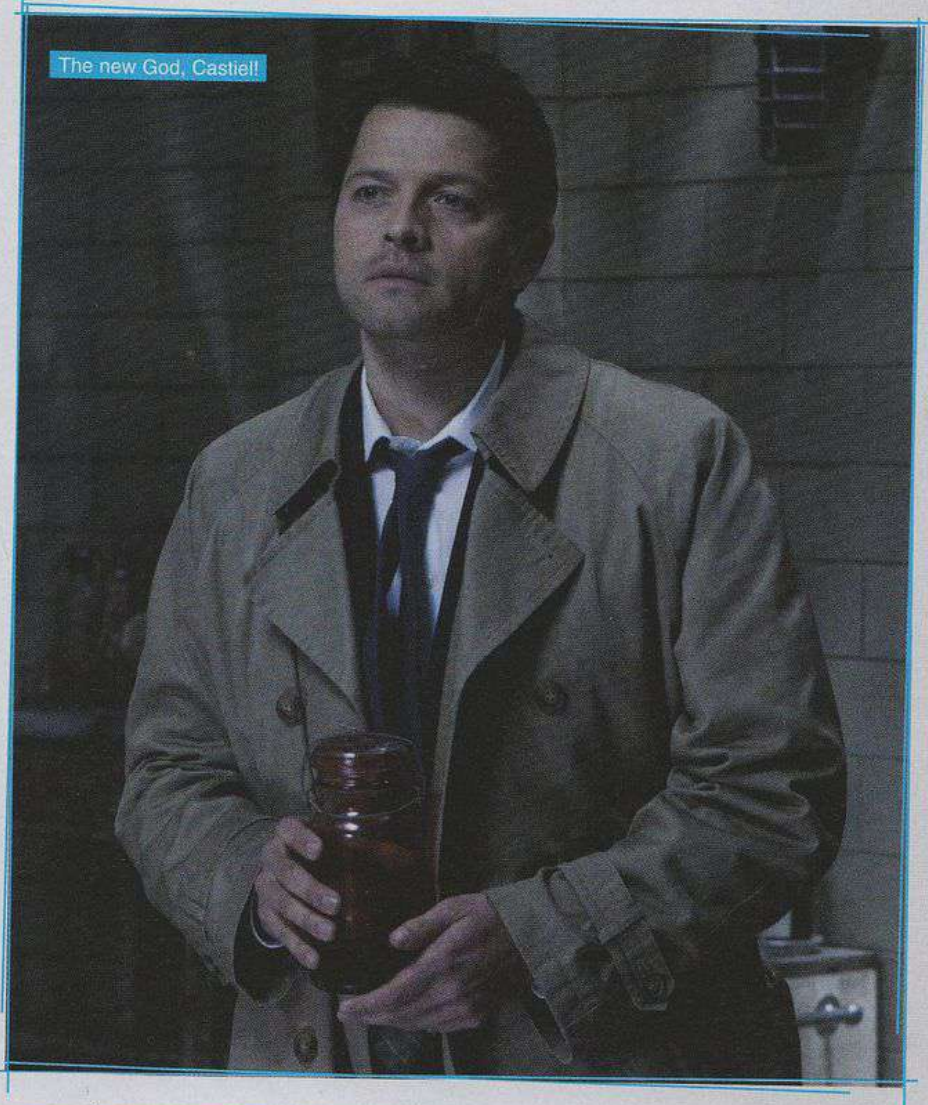
"When Castiel was introduced to the show in the first episode of season four [*Lazarus Rising*], he was originally intended to be a more minor character, but Castiel introduced the entire mythology of angels and Heaven."

> **"Castiel taking this dark turn is something that is actually consistent with the character."**

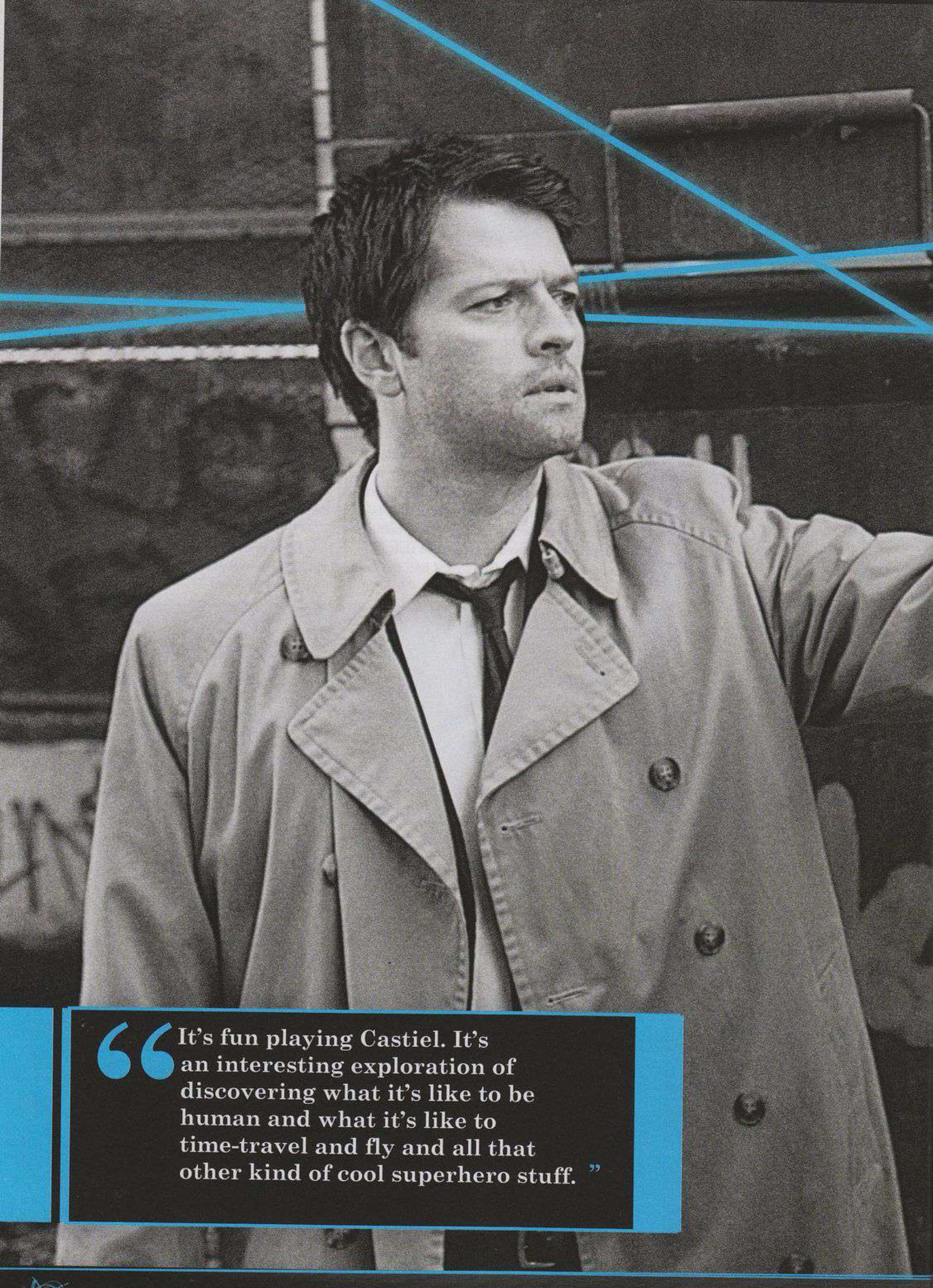
with the character. I mean, in the very beginning when Castiel was first introduced, he was advocating killing every man, woman, and child in a small village in order to make sure that a certain witch was destroyed. And Sam and Dean were like, "Hey, hey, that's a lot of collateral damage. We can find another way." And he reluctantly went along, but collateral damage honestly is something that Castiel's character has been okay with from the beginning, and I think that's also consistent with biblical lore about angels. Angels are these righteous, smite-y beings. [The Book of] Revelation forecast that angels will come down and kill half the fish in the sea and a third of all the beasts on the land and dry up the rivers and do whatever bad things make your car batteries die. They're beings who aren't afraid to kill and destroy. And I think what Castiel [did] with the souls is a good choice for the storyline of the show. We'll see...

With Castiel apparently gone, do you think God will bring him back like he did the other times?

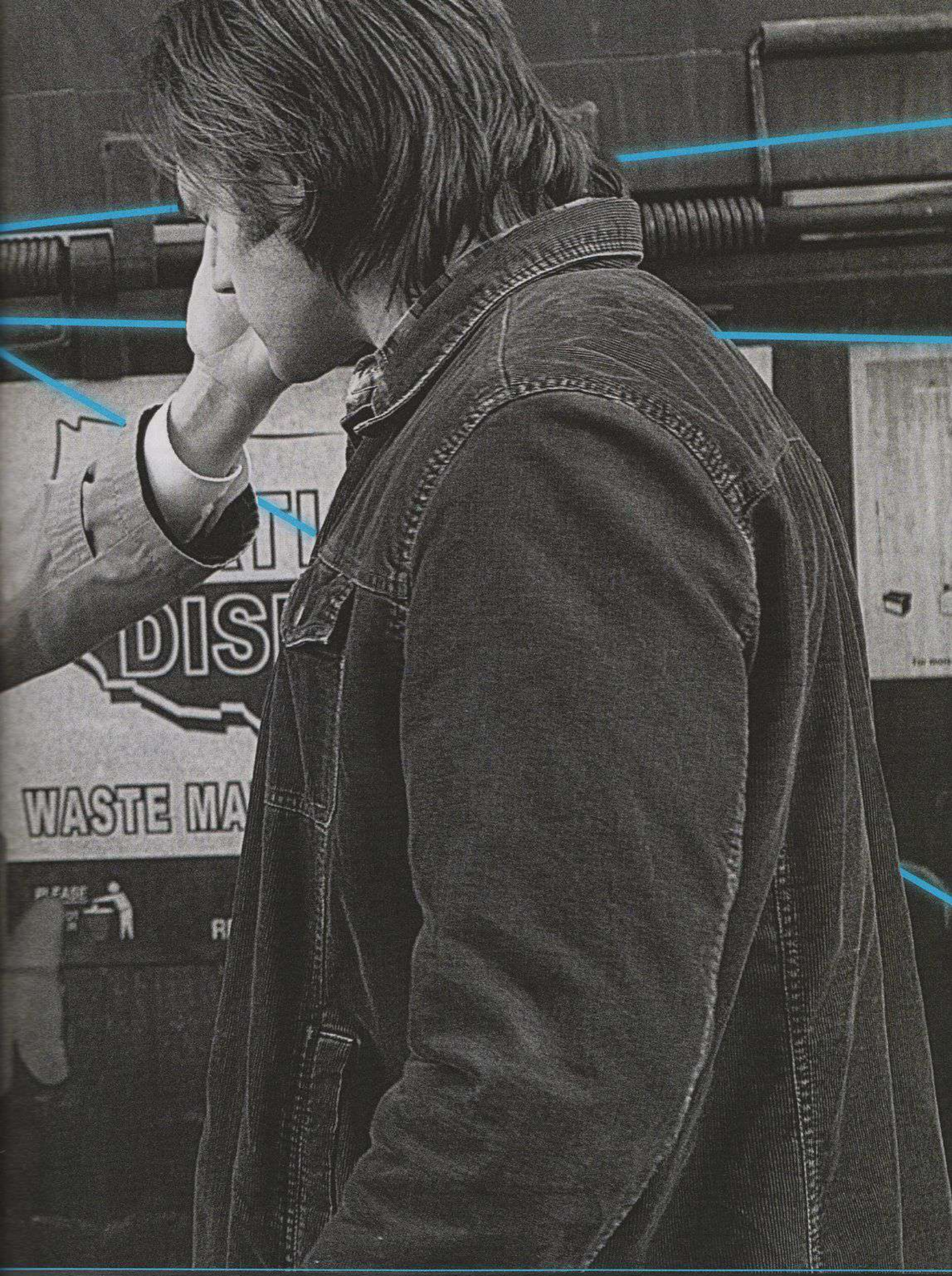
Now [I've been] God, so hopefully I could bring myself back!



The new God, Castiel!



"It's fun playing Castiel. It's an interesting exploration of discovering what it's like to be human and what it's like to time-travel and fly and all that other kind of cool superhero stuff."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